Prunedale Improvement Project

Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment

On Route 101 north of the City of Salinas in Monterey County

05-MON-101-KP R146.8/161.6

(PM R91.2/100.4)

EA 05-0161E0

Prepared by the
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and the
State of California Department of Transportation

May 2005

General Information About This Document

What's in this document?

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives being considered for the proposed project located in Monterey County, California. The document describes why the project is being proposed, alternatives for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, the potential impacts from each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What should you do?

- Please read this Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Additional copies of the document, as well as the technical studies are available for review at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, 55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA 93901; the Monterey County Prunedale Branch Library, 17822 Moro Road, Prunedale, CA; and the John Steinbeck Salinas Public Library, 350 Lincoln Avenue, Salinas, CA.
- We welcome your comments. If you have any concerns regarding the proposed project, please attend the Public Hearing and/or send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via regular mail to Caltrans, Attn: Kristen Merriman, 2015 East Shields, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726; submit comments via email to kristen_merriman@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: July 7, 2005.

What happens next?

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration may (1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, (2) do additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. If the project were given environmental approval and funding were appropriated, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Kristen Merriman, 2015 East Shields, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726; 559-243-8178 Voice, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, 1-800-735-2929.

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Improve safety and operations on Route 101
north of the City of Salinas in Monterey County

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration, and
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

5/6/05
Date of Approval

Gregg Albright
District Director
California Department of Transportation

5/12/05
Date of Approval

for Gene K. Fong, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Summary

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration propose to construct a series of safety and operational improvements along Route 101 north of the City of Salinas in Monterey County.

Major modifications to Route 101 within the project limits have been proposed since the early 1960s when a project was initiated to construct a 13-kilometer (8-mile) bypass east of the community of Prunedale. That project was set aside because of limited funding, as were two similar projects proposed in later decades. Although funding has not been available for a bypass or widening of the existing highway, the growing congestion and safety concerns in the project area have been addressed incrementally with projects such as a new interchange at San Miguel Canyon Road, modifications to the 101/156 interchange, acceleration and deceleration lanes, shoulder widening, etc. The Prunedale Improvement Project is the most ambitious of these incremental improvements to address safety and traffic operational needs. A long-term congestion relief project is expected to follow as funds become available.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety along Route 101 and intersecting local roadways, improve traffic flow along existing Route 101, and improve accessibility to area homes, businesses, and services. A combination of heavy traffic, numerous uncontrolled access points, a poor local road network, and nonstandard roadway features, have contributed to the deterioration of operating conditions and an increase in collisions along this section of Route 101.

The proposed alternatives include a no-build and a build alternative. The No-Build Alternative has the least environmental impacts, but does not address the purpose and need of the project. No improvements would be made to the existing Route 101 through Prunedale and no construction is proposed. Conditions along this segment of Route 101 would continue to deteriorate.

The Build Alternative proposes:

- Build two new interchanges at Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Road and 1.0 kilometer (0.62 mile) north of Russell/Espinosa Road;
- Make improvements to an existing interchange at San Miguel Canyon Road;
- Improve and construct local roads, including the addition of one new local road overcrossing and one new local road undercrossing; and

- Add median barriers at various locations throughout the project limits.

A list of major potential impacts from the alternatives is summarized in the table at the end of this summary.

The National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act have different approaches when determining significance (refer to Chapter 4, California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation).

The project would have an effect on the following resources:

- Aesthetics (Visual Resources)
- Biological resources
- Hydrology and water quality

Summary of Major Potential Impacts From Alternatives

Potential Impact		Alternative 1	No-Build Alternative
Land use	**Consistency with the Monterey General Plan**	Project is consistent with Monterey County's 21st Century General Plan (2005 expected approval)	Is consistent with the 1982 Monterey County General Plan (now in revision)
Farmland		Acquisition: Total of 37.64 hectares (93 acres) of farmland of which 15.7 hectares (38.8 acres) are prime and unique farmland and 2.3 hectares (5.6 acres) are of statewide or local importance	No Impact
Relocation	**Business displacements**	7 businesses	No Impact
	Housing displacements	36 Single-Family homes 1 Mobile Home 1 Duplex 1 single-residence apartment (conversion)	No Impact
	Utility service relocation	Electric, underground gas pipes, cable, and telephone at several locations	No Impact
Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and bicycle facilities		Improvements to safety and local circulations. Addition of pedestrian and bicycle access.	No Impact
Visual		Impacts to visual quality. Mitigation would be incorporated in project design.	No Impact
Noise		Noise abatement measures recommended from Boronda to Martines roads: 3 soundwalls proposed.	No Impact
Vibration		Short-term construction impacts to structures located within 30 meters (100 feet) of new highway structures.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Alternative 1	No-Build Alternative
Natural Communities	Permanent Impacts: Central Maritime Chaparral – 2.97 hectares/7.33 acres Coast Live Oak Woodland – 3.85 hectares/9.50 acres Temporary Impacts: Central Maritime Chaparral – 2.39 hectares/5.91 acres Coast Live Oak Woodland – 3.74 hectares/9.24 acres	No Impact
Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.	Permanent Impacts: Wetlands – 0.43 hectares/ 1.06 acres Other Waters of the U.S. – 0.20 hectares/0.49 acres Temporary Impacts: Wetlands – 0.96 hectares/2.39 acres Other Waters of the U.S. – 0.12 hectares/0.28 acres	No Impact
Plants (Listed by the California Native Plant Society)	Permanent Impacts: Branching beach aster – 0.060 hectares/0.146 acres Monterey ceanothus – 0.006 hectares/0.014 acres Pajaro manzanita – 2.97 hectares/7.33 acres	No Impact
Animals (California Species of Special Concern)	Cooper's hawk, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, southwestern pond turtle, yellow warbler	No Impact
Threatened or endangered species	Permanent Impacts: California red-legged frog – (occupied habitat) 0.084 hectares/0.208 acres (unoccupied suitable habitat) 0.452 hectares/1.116 acres Monterey spineflower – (occupied habitat) 0.002 hectares/0.006 acres (unoccupied suitable habitat) 0.094 hectares/0.232 acres	No Impact
Exotic Animals/Invasive Plants	No Impact	No Impact
Required Permits/Agreements	1601 Agreement: California Department of Fish and Game; 401Certification: Regional Water Quality Control Board; 404 Permit: Army Corps of Engineers	N/A

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List of Technical Studies that are Bound Separately

Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report (September 2004)
Historic Property Survey Report (February 2004)
Water Quality Report/Memorandum (October 2003)
Noise Technical Report (February 2005)
Vibration Study/Memorandum (November 2003)
Air Quality Analysis (April 2004)
Paleontology Report/Memorandum (September 2003)
Hazardous Waste Investigation/Memorandum (October 2003)
Community Impact Assessment (March 2004)
Visual Impact Assessment (February 2004)
Relocation Impact Statement-Draft (December 2003)
Location Hydraulics Study and Floodplain Evaluation (June 2004)
Natural Environment Study (July 2004)
Biological Assessment (April 2005)

List of Abbreviated Terms

Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
dBA	decibel
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
KP	kilometer post
PM	post mile
PM 10	particulate matter that is 10 microns in diameter or smaller
ppm	parts per million
USC	United States Code

Chapter 1 Purpose of and Need for Project

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration propose to construct a series of safety and operational improvements along 14.8 kilometers (9.2 miles) of Route 101 north of the City of Salinas in Monterey County (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). Within the project limits, a number of local roads and driveways enter directly onto the highway. The proposed project would:

- Construct two new interchanges;
- Improve an existing interchange;
- Improve and construct local roads, including the addition of one new local-road overcrossing and one new local-road undercrossing; and
- Place median barriers at various locations throughout the project limits.

This project is not the Prunedale Freeway Project. For information concerning the Prunedale Freeway Project, see the project history section, 1.3.1.

This project is funded with 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program funding and "demonstration project" funding through special federal legislation. The proposed construction funding would be from the State Transportation Improvement Program in the 2008/2009 fiscal year. The State Transportation Improvement Program funds are broken down into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which is administered by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program, which is administered by the California Department of Transportation. Both the Regional Transportation Improvement Program and the Interregional Transportation Program are funded using Federal and State dollars. At this time, there are no "local" funding sources for this project such as sales taxes and developer fees.

1.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Improve safety along Route 101 and intersecting local roadways
- Improve traffic flow along existing Route 101
- Improve accessibility to area homes, businesses, and services

1.2 Project Need

Route 101 within the project limits is a four-lane divided expressway with 3.7-meter (12-foot) lanes and 1.8- to 2.4-meter (six- to eight-foot) paved shoulders. There are two grade-separated interchanges: one at the Route 101/156 junction, at an approximately equal distance from the northern and southern project limits; and one at the Route 101/San Miguel interchange. There are also 67 driveways and local streets that intersect with the highway at-grade, 24 of which allow left-turn movements across Route 101 traffic.

The combination of heavy traffic, numerous uncontrolled access points, an inadequate local road circulation network, and nonstandard geometric features, have contributed to a deterioration of operating conditions and an increase in collisions along this section of Route 101. As traffic volumes increase, conditions will continue to deteriorate along the highway, resulting in substantial delays, frequent queuing, and more difficult turning movements.

Route 101 within the project limits accommodates significant amounts of interregional traffic, including commercial and agricultural trucking, and tourist and business traffic. The route also carries heavy regional commuter, recreational, and business-related traffic. Route 101 is part of the National Highway System and is functionally classified as a principal arterial. The federal Department of Defense in cooperation with the Department of Transportation has also identified Route 101 as a Strategic Highway Corridor Network route. This is a network of linked highways deemed essential to national defense for facilitating the movement of troops and equipment to airports, ports, rail lines, and military bases.

Route 101 is on the Freeway and Expressway System, whose completion has been declared essential to the future development of the State, with provision for control of access to the extent necessary to preserve the value and utility of the facilities. In addition, Route 101 is on the Interregional Road System and is a designated Focus Route in the Caltrans Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan.

The importance of Route 101 for the movement of goods through the State and nation is indicated by additional federal and state designations. The Route is a designated route on the National Truck Network under the federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act. This network is designated for use by larger trucks. Route 101 is also a State Highway Extra Legal Load Route.

1.2.1 Safety

The primary purpose of this project is to improve safety along Route 101 within the project limits. Operations would also be expected to improve with construction of the proposed design features. The project proposes to reduce accident rates by removing cross-traffic within the project limits. Currently there are 19 local road intersections and 48 driveways along this section of Route 101. Of the 67 access points, 24 allow a left-turn movement across Route 101 traffic (11 at private driveways and 13 at local intersections).

A collision analysis was performed along Route 101, comparing collisions at each of the 15 primary local road intersections and driveway access points to that of the statewide average on a similar roadway (see Table 1.1). This data was collected to determine where the collision concentrations occurred and what the primary collision factors were for individual intersections. This analysis, the Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System-Table B data, was collected for a three-year period between May 1, 2000 and April 30, 2003. The analysis system does not recognize some of the smaller local roads and driveways as intersections. Therefore, a detailed collision analysis is not available for Easy Street, Victoria Lane, Beatrice Drive, Oak Heights, or for the various driveways through the project limits.

The data collected indicates that during this period, there were 271 collisions in the vicinity of intersections with Route 101 that resulted in 92 injuries and 6 fatalities.

Of the 15 primary intersections with Route 101, five have a higher than average concentration of collisions: Russell Road/Espinosa Road, Blackie Road/Reese Circle, Messick Road North, Crazy Horse Canyon Road, and Echo Valley Road.

A separate analysis was performed along Route 101 for collisions on mainline Route 101 that may or may not have had association with intersection collisions. Along the Route 101 mainline within the project limits in the northbound direction, the collision rate (between January 2001 and December 2003) was lower than the statewide average on a similar roadway per million vehicle miles traveled. Within the southbound direction, however, the collision rate was higher than the statewide average. There were 812 collisions on mainline Route 101 within the project limits that resulted in 251 injuries and 9 fatalities. Of those 812 collisions, 381 were in the northbound direction and 431 collisions were in the southbound direction of travel.

Table 1.1 Three-year Accident Totals for Route 101 in the Vicinity of Intersections within Project Limits (May 1, 2000 to April 30, 2003)

Intersection	Number of Collisions	Actual*			Average*		
		Fatal	Fatal + Injury	Total[3]	Fatal	Fatal + Injury	Total[3]
Russell/Espinosa Road[1] (PM R91.90)	48	**0.015**	**0.26**	**0.70**	0.008	0.16	0.33
White Road[1] (PM 92.55)	11	0.000	0.08	0.20	0.004	0.10	0.22
Martines Road (PM 92.80)	7	0.000	0.02	0.11	0.004	0.10	0.22
Ralph Lane[1] (PM 93.10)	11	0.000	0.05	0.18	0.004	0.10	0.22
Blackie Road/Reese Circle[1] (PM 94.28)	27	**0.032**	**0.18**	**0.43**	0.004	0.14	0.34
Orchard Lane[1] (PM 94.34)	11	**0.016**	0.08	0.18	0.002	0.08	0.19
Pesante Road[1] (PM 94.50)	21	0.016	0.20	0.33	0.016	0.28	0.55
Berta Canyon Road/Prunedale South Road (PM 95.32)	13	0.000	0.06	0.21	0.004	0.14	0.34
Messick Road-South[1] (PM 96.39)	19	**0.017**	**0.16**	0.34	0.004	0.14	0.34
Messick Road-North (PM 96.58)	14	0.000	**0.10**	**0.24**	0.002	0.08	0.19
Tustin Road[1] (PM 96.89)	9	0.000	0.08	0.15	0.002	0.08	0.19
Mallory Canyon Road[1] (PM 97.81)	3	0.000	0.00	0.07	0.002	0.08	0.19
Moro Road[1] (PM 97.98)	10	0.000	0.05	0.17	0.002	0.08	0.19
Crazy Horse Canyon Road[1] (PM 98.38)	43	0.000	0.21	**0.74**	0.004	0.10	0.22
Echo Valley Road[1] (PM 98.69)	24	0.000	0.05	**0.41**	0.004	0.10	0.22
48 Private Driveways and 4 Minor Local Roads (Total number = 52)[2]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Rates = Accidents per Million Vehicles. Bold numbering indicates accident rates above the statewide average for a similar roadway.

[1]Existing intersection allows left-turn movement.

[2]Oak Heights Drive and 11of the 48 Private Driveways allow a left-turn movement across Route 101

[3]Total includes “property damage only” accidents

1.2.2 Traffic Operations

Present Traffic and Operational Conditions

High traffic volumes, non-standard roadway features, and inadequate access control have contributed to the development of congested conditions on Route 101 within the project limits. Volumes along Route 101 currently range from 54,000 to 87,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic in the peak month, and 5,800 to 6,600 vehicles per hour in the peak hour (2003 Traffic Volumes on California State Highways). Trucks account for approximately 8 percent of traffic during peak hours.

Numerous traffic conflicts are generated by the turning and merge/diverge movements from local road and driveway intersections, which cause both substantial delays and frequent long queues for traffic turning left from or onto Route 101. The high traffic volumes and frequent turning movements result in pronounced speed differentials that exacerbate the difficulty motorists experience in attempting to enter and exit Route 101.

Although substantial delays turning left from northbound Route 101 onto San Miguel Canyon Road were resolved with the completion of the interchange in 2002, peak period delays are still common for motorists turning left onto Espinosa, Blackie, Tustin, Moro, and Echo Valley Roads from northbound Route 101. Left-turn delays from southbound Route 101 are found at Ralph Lane, Reese Circle, Pesante Road, Messick Road, and Crazy Horse Canyon Road. Pesante Road serves the Prunedale Elementary School and school bus parking lot, as well as residences. High through-traffic volumes on Route 101 create turning movement delays for both local residents and the heavy volume of school bus trips.

Accessibility

Individuals using local roads within Prunedale must often use Route 101 to get from one place to another. This lack of internal circulation has led to increased traffic congestion and safety concerns. The following examples identify just a few of the local access issues:

- Russell Road/Espinosa Road: to get from one side of Route 101 to the other, individuals must cross the highway. Furthermore, individuals wanting to shop or access other amenities in Prunedale must travel north on Route 101.
- Blackie Road/Reese Circle Road: to get from one side of Route 101 to the other, individuals must cross the highway. Furthermore, individuals on the east side of the highway at this location wanting to access Vierra Canyon Road must cross Route 101, or travel several miles out of their way.

- Echo Valley Road/Crazy Horse Canyon Road: to get from one side of Route 101 to the other, individuals must cross Route 101, or travel several miles out of their way.

Future Traffic and Operational Conditions

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties and the agency responsible for meeting the metropolitan transportation needs and air quality planning requirements of that three-county area. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is responsible for developing and maintaining a traffic model primarily for air quality purposes as required by the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990. A single traffic model exists to collectively meet air quality standards set forth for all three counties. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments model was used to forecast traffic demand for each project alternative. Actual traffic counts were used to validate the model's traffic volume projections for current year data. Since the model does not provide projections beyond 2020, an annual growth rate of 2 percent was used to forecast to the design year, 2030.

Traffic on Route 101 is expected to increase from the current range of approximately 54,000 to 87,000 vehicles per day to between 99,000 and 160,000 vehicles per day in 2030. Corresponding to this increase, analysis suggests the level of service would decrease on Route 101, and that gaps in traffic flow would continue to decrease. The decreased traffic gaps, and increased congestion would exacerbate the conflict between local and through traffic, and further restrict local circulation in the Prunedale area.

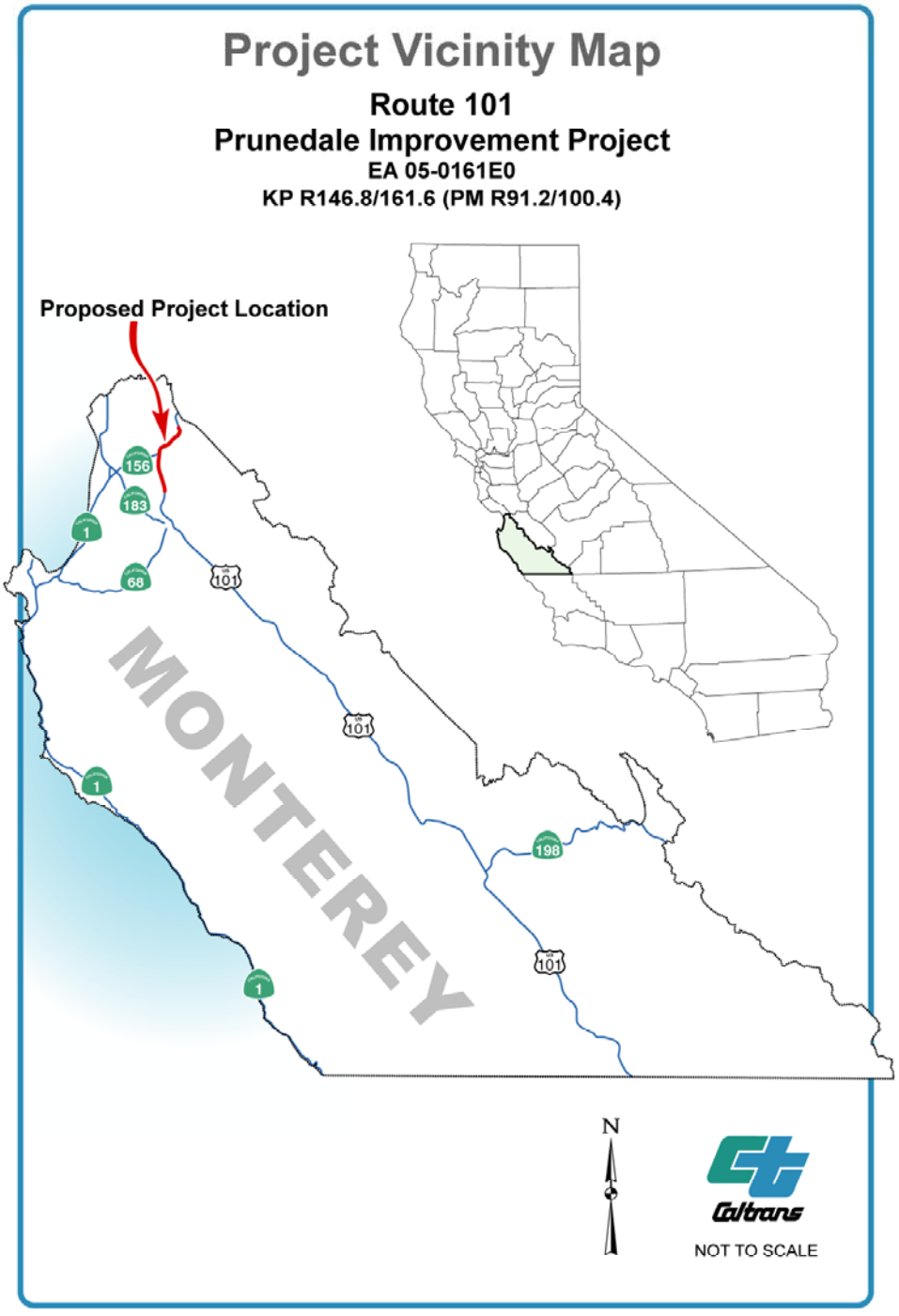

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

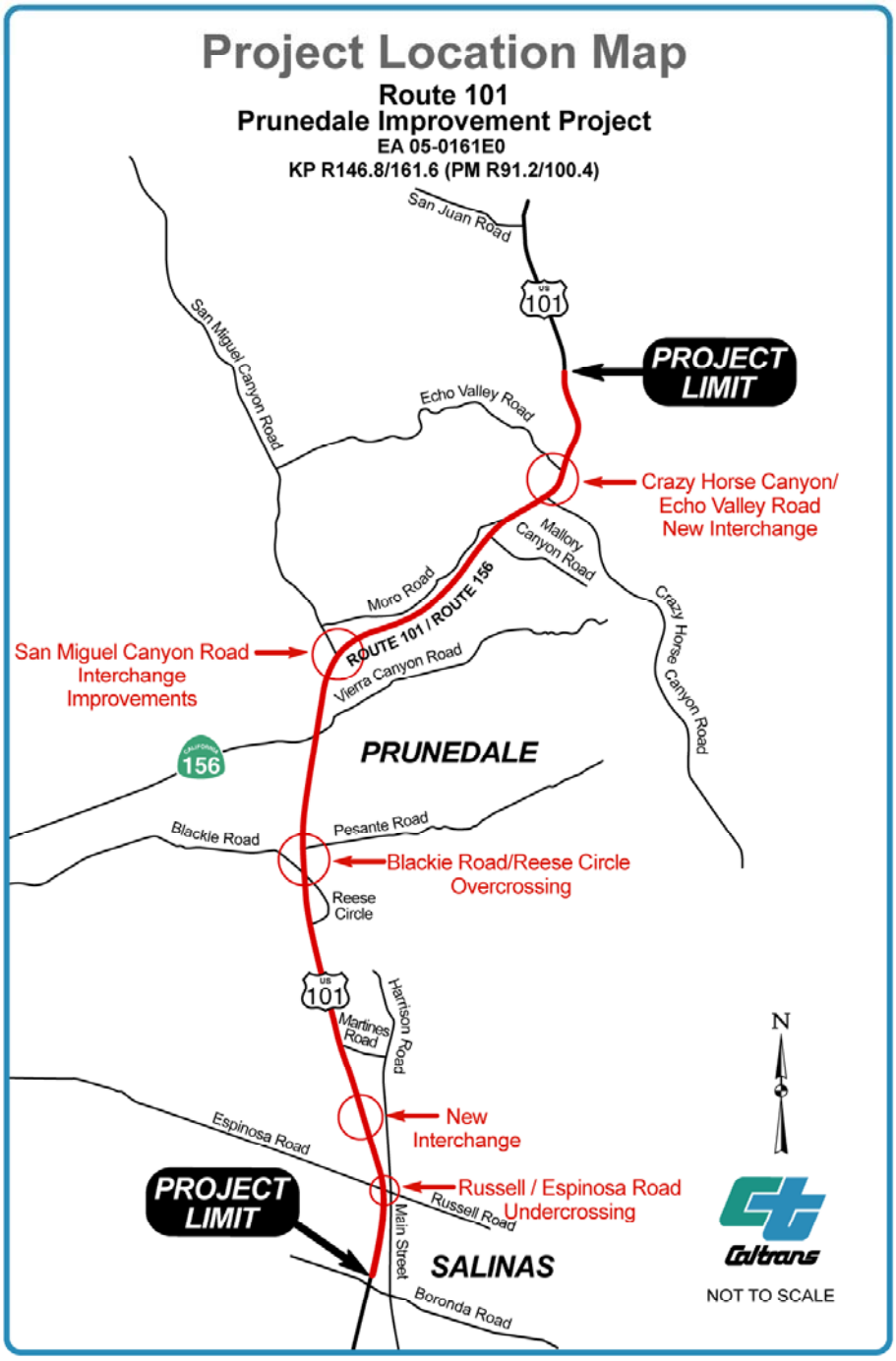

Figure 1-2 Project Location Map

1.3 Project Background

1.3.1 Project History

U.S. Route 101, or Route 101, is a major north-south highway between the San Jose and the Salinas Valley areas and a primary link in the highway network serving interstate traffic in the western United States. Route 101 is also a major north-south arterial in Monterey County, providing access to the agricultural areas of the Salinas Valley and serving recreational travelers to the Pacific Coast and the Los Padres National Forest.

In the early 1960s, a project was initiated to improve the segment of Route 101 in the project area by constructing a 13-kilometer (eight-mile) bypass east of the community of Prunedale. The route adoption and freeway agreement were approved, and substantial right-of-way for the bypass alternative was acquired before the development of the National Environmental Policy Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, and other environmental laws now in effect. The project was in the final design phase when it was determined that funding was not available and it was set aside.

That same project was restarted as a locally funded (Measure B sales tax) project in the late 1980s. To meet the federal and state environmental processes put in place in the 1970s, alternatives matching the same limits of the original bypass project were developed and evaluated. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report was completed and circulated to the public in 1993. Before a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report could be approved, however, the local sales tax measure was overturned in court and funding was again unavailable.

In early 1999, funding again became available for improvements to Route 101 in the project area. Public information meetings and focus groups were held to review the alternatives from the 1993 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and to develop new alternatives to address changed conditions.

In 2002, the Transportation Agency of Monterey County passed a resolution that stated (in part) that the Transportation Agency of Monterey County and Caltrans would take a phased approach to addressing transportation needs along Route 101. Caltrans would construct safety and traffic operational improvements first, followed by congestion and long-term relief improvements. This proposed project, known as

the Prunedale Improvement Project, addresses the safety and traffic operational needs.

This project would improve safety and traffic operations by reducing traffic conflicts, consolidating or reducing access points, constructing two interchanges, an overcrossing, and an undercrossing, constructing and improving local roads, and placing median barrier (within the project limits) where gaps currently exist.

1.3.2 Related Projects

The Prunedale Improvement Project is part of a continuing effort by the Transportation Agency of Monterey County and Caltrans to improve Route 101 in the project area. In the past five years, five safety and operational projects have been constructed. In addition to the Prunedale Improvement Project (anticipated project completion date Spring 2012), two other projects are planned for the future:

- 156 West Corridor. The conversion of the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway/freeway. The limits of the proposed project on Route 156 extend from near the City of Castroville just east of the 156/183 Separation to Route 101 in Prunedale. This project would include a full interchange at the intersection of Route 101 and 156. This project would ease congestion and improve safety in and near Castroville.
- Prunedale Freeway Project. A project proposed to increase capacity on Route 101 from north of Boronda Road near Salinas to just south of San Juan Road. This project would include alternatives within the existing Route 101 corridor and a bypass around the community of Prunedale.

Chapter 2 Project Alternatives

2.1 Alternative Development Process

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety along Route 101 and intersecting local roadways; improve traffic flow along existing Route 101; and improve accessibility to area homes, businesses, and services. Alternatives were developed to accomplish these purposes, as well as to minimize environmental impacts, meet state design standards, and minimize cost.

2.2 Project Alternatives

Throughout the process of preliminary engineering design and development of the environmental document, the project development team studied alternative solutions, held public information meetings, and met with local officials. As more was learned about the project area, the range of alternatives was narrowed to two alternatives; the "No-Build" and one build alternative were selected.

Final selection of a preferred alternative would not be made until after the full evaluation of environmental impacts, full consideration of public comments, and approval of the final environmental document.

2.2.1 The "No-Build" Alternative

Consideration of a No-Build Alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. The No-Build Alternative has the least environmental impacts, but does not address the purpose and need of the project. Under the No-Build Alternative, no improvements would be made to existing Route 101 within the project limits and no construction would be proposed. Conditions along this segment of Route 101 would continue to deteriorate and accident rates at the 10 locations would continue to be above the statewide average for the same type of roadway.

2.2.2 The "Build" Alternative

Proposed improvements are shown in Figures 2-1 through 2-10.

Beginning at the south end, the proposed project features include:

- A four-lane, fully access-controlled freeway on a new alignment between 0.3 kilometers (0.18 miles) north of the Boronda Road interchange and the intersection of Martines Road.
- An undercrossing at the new elevated freeway at Russell and Espinosa Roads, connecting the two local roads and allowing through movements from the east and west sides of Route 101. No access to Route 101 would be provided at this location.
- An extension of, and improvement to, an existing local road (Access Road 1), which lies north of Espinosa Road.
- A new local road and interchange (overcrossing) constructed approximately 1.0 kilometer (0.62 mile) north of Russell/Espinosa Road.
- Widening the local road intersection of Main Street/Harrison Road and Russell/Espinosa Road.
- Auxiliary lanes between Boronda Road interchange and the new interchange north of Russell/Espinosa.
- A new local road connecting White Road to Martines Road.
- A cul-de-sac at the intersection of Martines Road and Route 101. Direct access to Route 101 from Martines Road would be eliminated and rerouted to the new interchange north of Russell/Espinosa Road.
- A new local road extending south from the intersection of Blackie and Prunedale South Roads. The new road would cross over Route 101 approximately 320 meters (1050 feet) south of the existing Blackie/Reese and Route 101 intersection and connect to Reese Circle, 130 meters (427 feet) east of Cross Road.
- An extension of Pollock Lane from Pesante Road south to Cross Road.
- Widening Cross Road, between Reese Circle and Pollock Lane.
- A cul-de-sac at the intersection of Orchard Lane and Route 101. Direct access to Route 101 from Orchard Lane would be eliminated and rerouted.
- A modification of the existing southbound off-ramps from Route 101 at San Miguel Canyon Road to allow left-turn movements.
- A new interchange at Crazy Horse Canyon Road and Route 101. Echo Valley and Crazy Horse Canyon Roads would be realigned to connect with an overcrossing at Route 101.
- An extension of Moro Road parallel to the existing Route 101 alignment from 50 meters (164 feet) north of Oak Estates Drive to Oak Heights Drive for local access along the west side of Route 101.

- An access road for fire services connecting Shady Drive to the realigned Echo Valley Road.
- A cul-de-sac on Echo Valley Road at the existing Route 101 and Echo Valley Road intersection. Direct access to Route 101 from Echo Valley Road would be eliminated and redirected to the new Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Road Interchange.
- Concrete median barrier on Route 101 from the new Russell/Espinosa undercrossing through the Crazy Horse interchange closing all median barrier gaps and eliminating all left turns.
- Retaining walls as required to minimize impacts to area residents and natural resources.
- Utility relocations (e.g. underground natural gas pipes, cable, electricity, and telephone lines) would be required at several locations.
- Borrow/fill sites and construction staging areas would be required.

These proposed improvements are consistent with the number of lanes (four), and facility type identified in the Transportation Concept Report for Route 101. The estimated cost of the proposed project is $236,000,000 (includes support costs).

2.2.3 Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management

The concept of Transportation System Management is about investigating possible changes to the transportation system that would increase the operational efficiency of the existing roadway; they are changes that increase the number of vehicle trips a roadway can carry without increasing the number of through lanes. Transportation Demand Management focuses on regional strategies for reducing the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled, as well as increasing vehicle occupancy.

High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, ramp metering, and other such transportation elements are considered as ways to maximize the use of the existing roadway, while reducing the costs and impacts associated with constructing additional lanes.

Evaluation of alternatives that are inclusive of multi-modal options, such as motorcycle, automobile, public and private transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, all as elements of a unified transportation system, expand the traveler's transportation choices in terms of travel method, travel route, travel costs, and travel time.

The Build Alternative is not solely a Transportation System Management/ Transportation Demand Management solution, but it does incorporate elements that would promote more efficient use of the roadway and increase the number of vehicle trips the road can carry, without increasing the number of through lanes on Route 101. These elements include the following:

1) Lanes with purposes supplementary to through traffic movement.
   These are the auxiliary lanes at the southern end of the project that would allow slower-moving traffic to merge on to or off Route 101 without disrupting the faster-moving traffic.

2) Improvements to access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
   Sidewalks would be constructed along some of the proposed local roads in the Russell/Espinosa area that would connect both the east and west sides of Route 101 and link residents to commercial services within the City of Salinas via existing and proposed sidewalks. Existing conditions do not allow pedestrians or bicyclists to safely cross Route 101 from one side of the highway to the other.

   The Blackie/Reese and Crazy Horse areas do not include sidewalks, although the improvements proposed would allow pedestrians access to the east and west sides of the highway and local road system. In addition, the geometrics of the roadway are designed in such a manner to accommodate sidewalks in the future.

   Equestrian and trail facilities that currently exist in the surrounding area would not be affected by the project improvements.

3) Improved access for buses.
   The proposed new interchanges would facilitate bus access to and from Route 101. Bus turnouts could be relocated from the state highway to a local road without negatively affecting service to riders. Adjustments to bus routes and relocation of bus turnouts would likely be required.

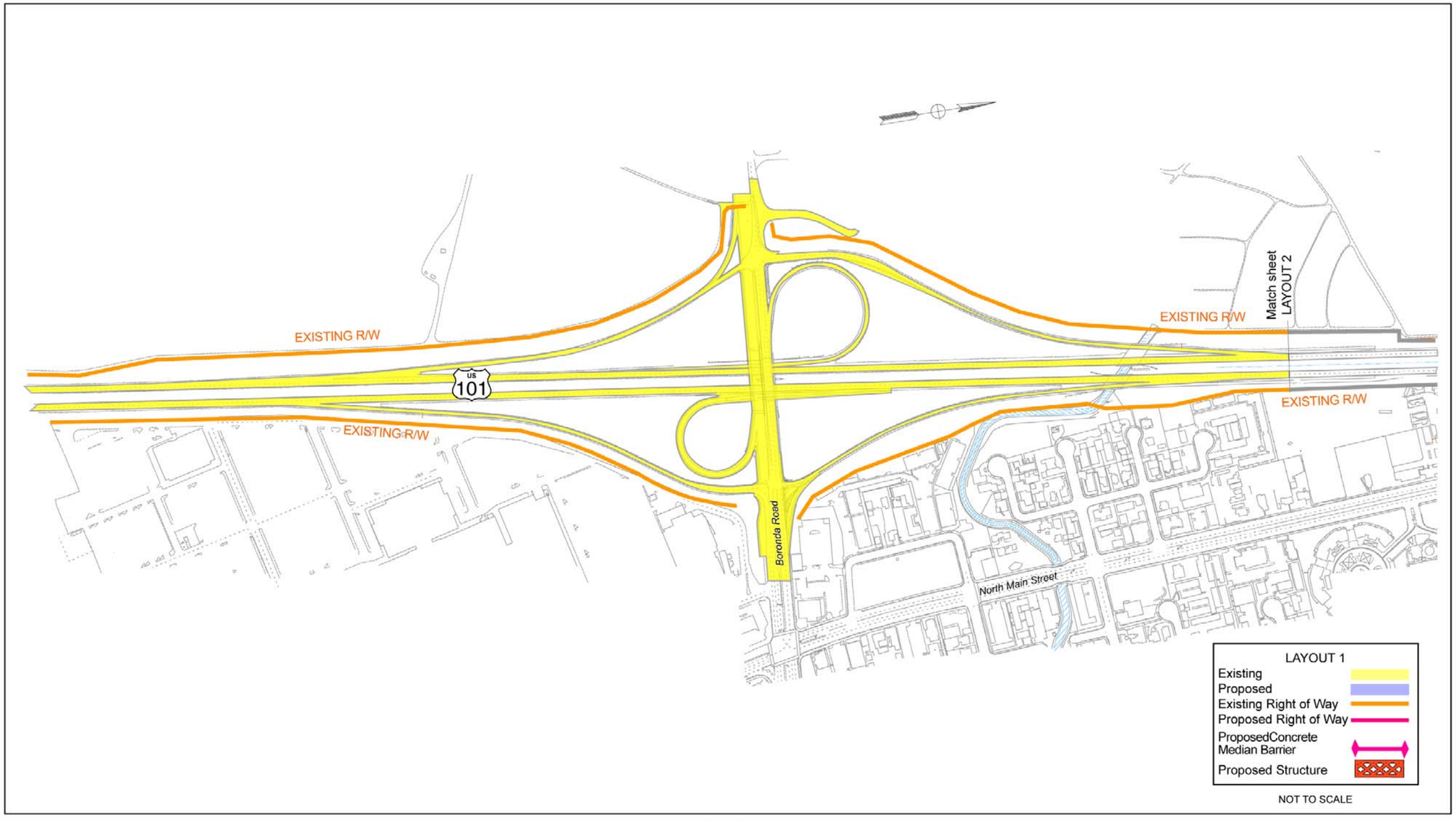

Figure 2-1 Build Alternative Design, Boronda Road Location

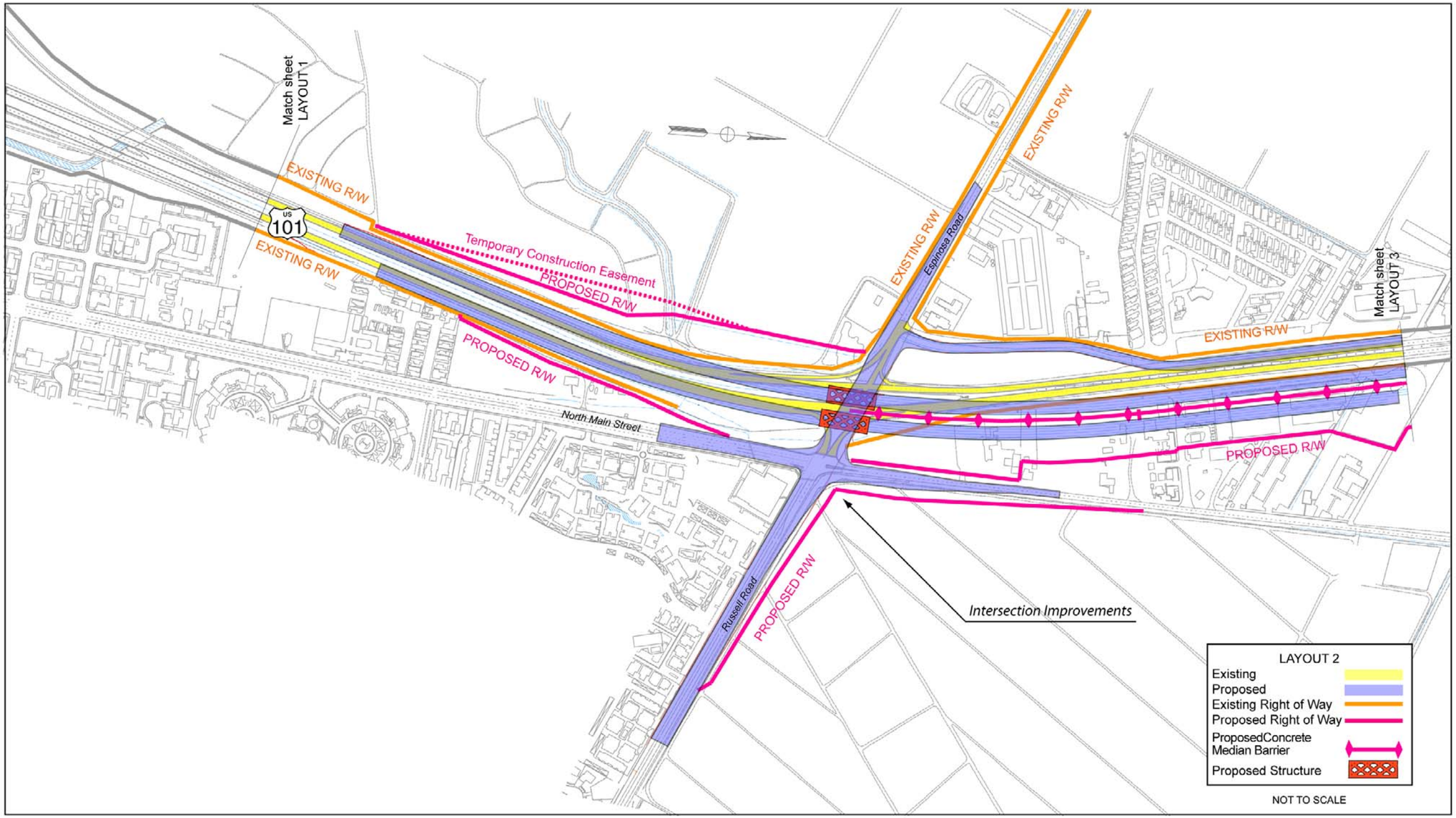

Figure 2-2 Build Alternative Design, Russell Road/Espinosa Road Location

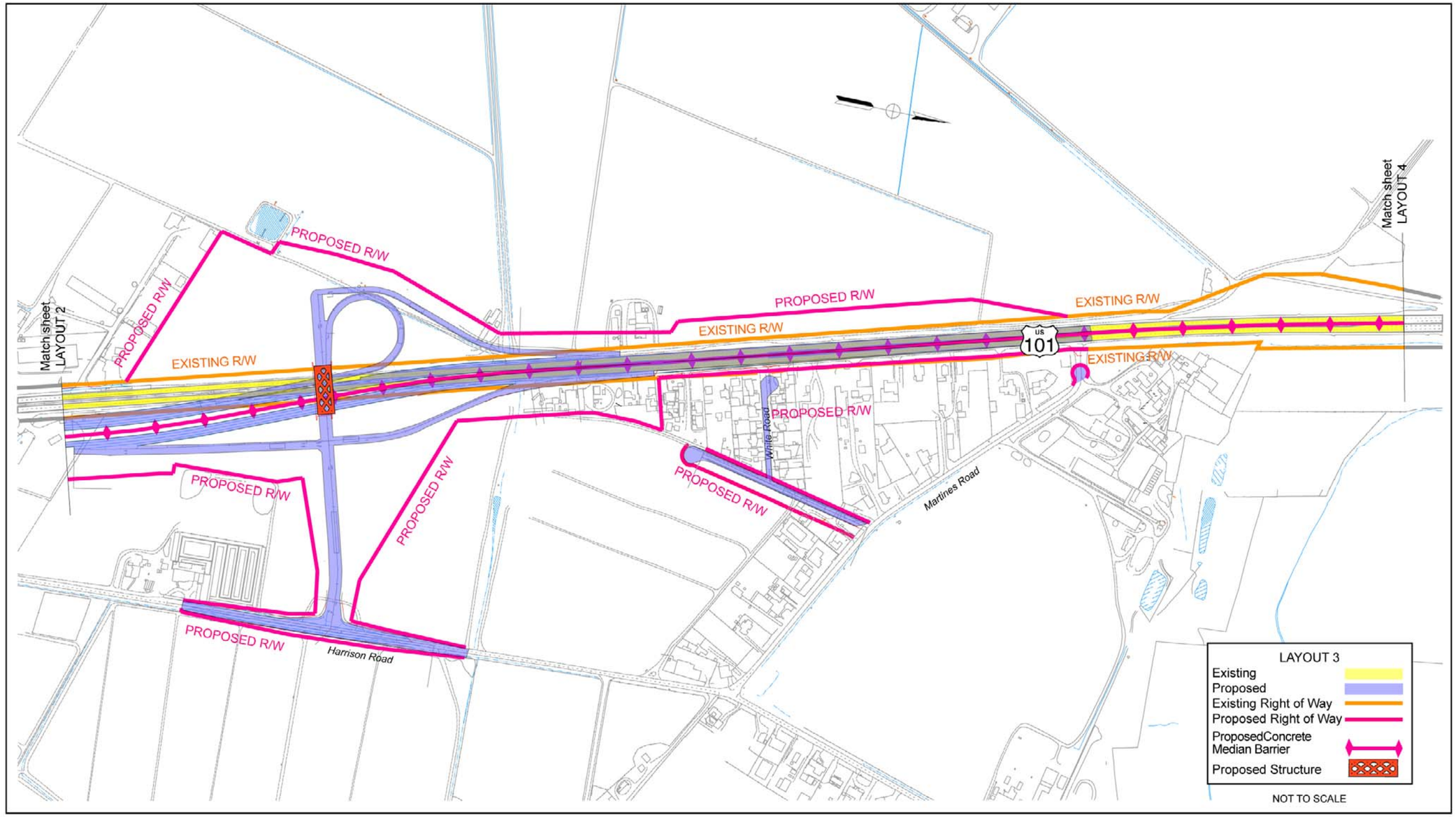

Figure 2-3 Build Alternative Design, Harrison/White Road Location

Caltrans

Figure 2-4 Build Alternative Design, Reese Circle/Ralph Lane Location

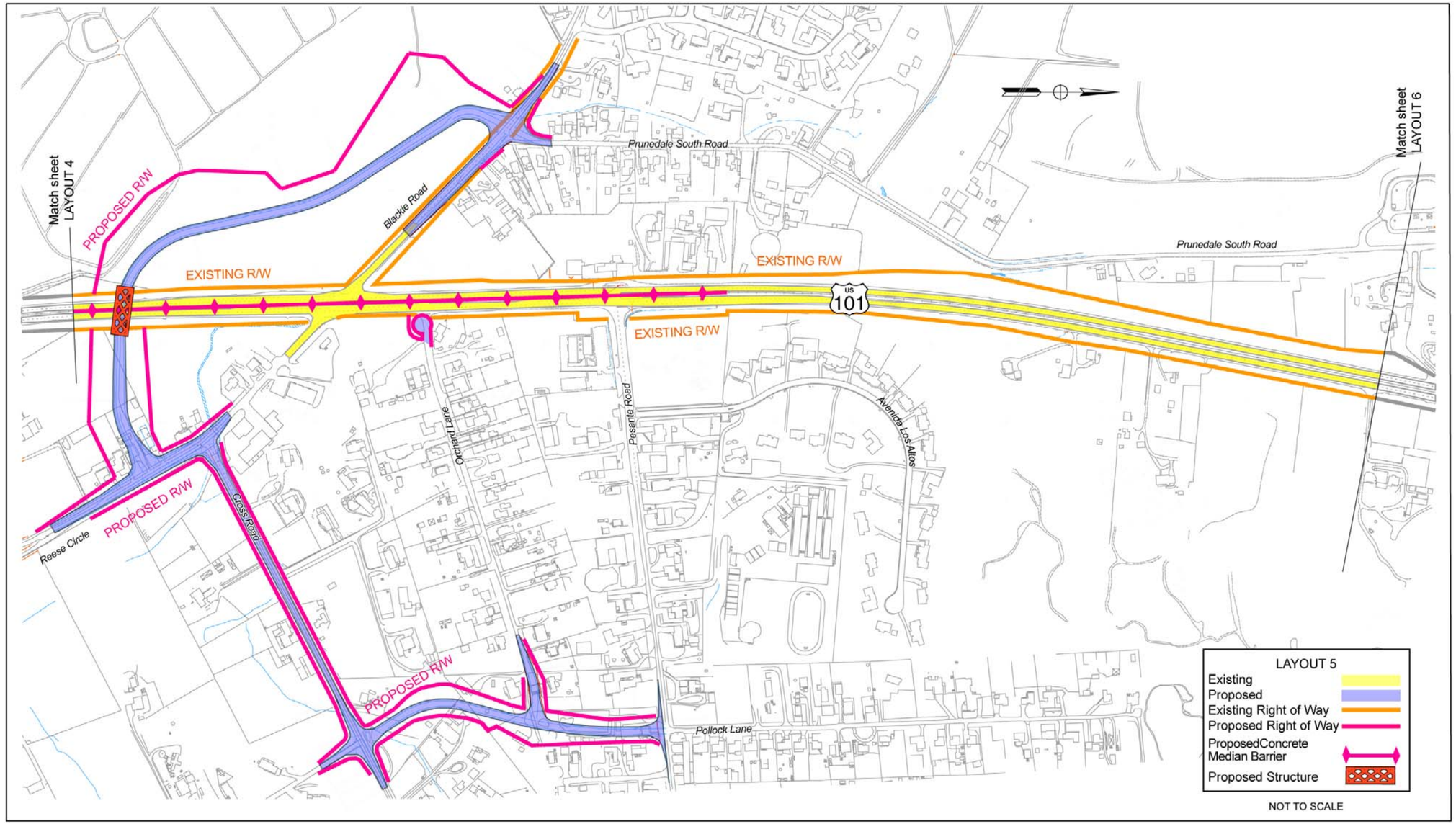

Figure 2-5 Build Alternative Design, Blackie Road/Reese Circle, Cross Road and Pollock Lane Location

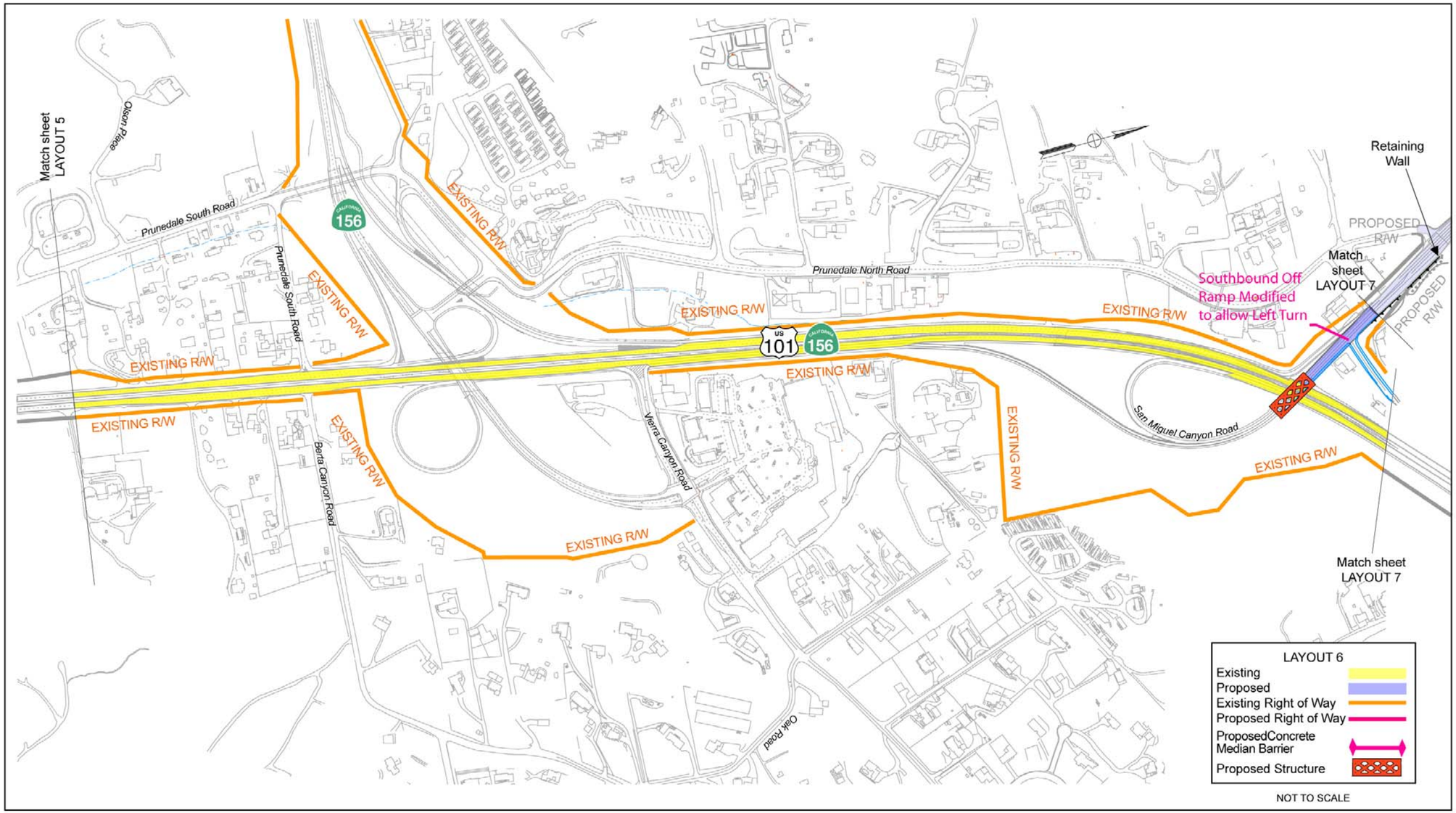

Figure 2-6 Build Alternative Design, Vierra Canyon Road/San Miguel Canyon Road Location

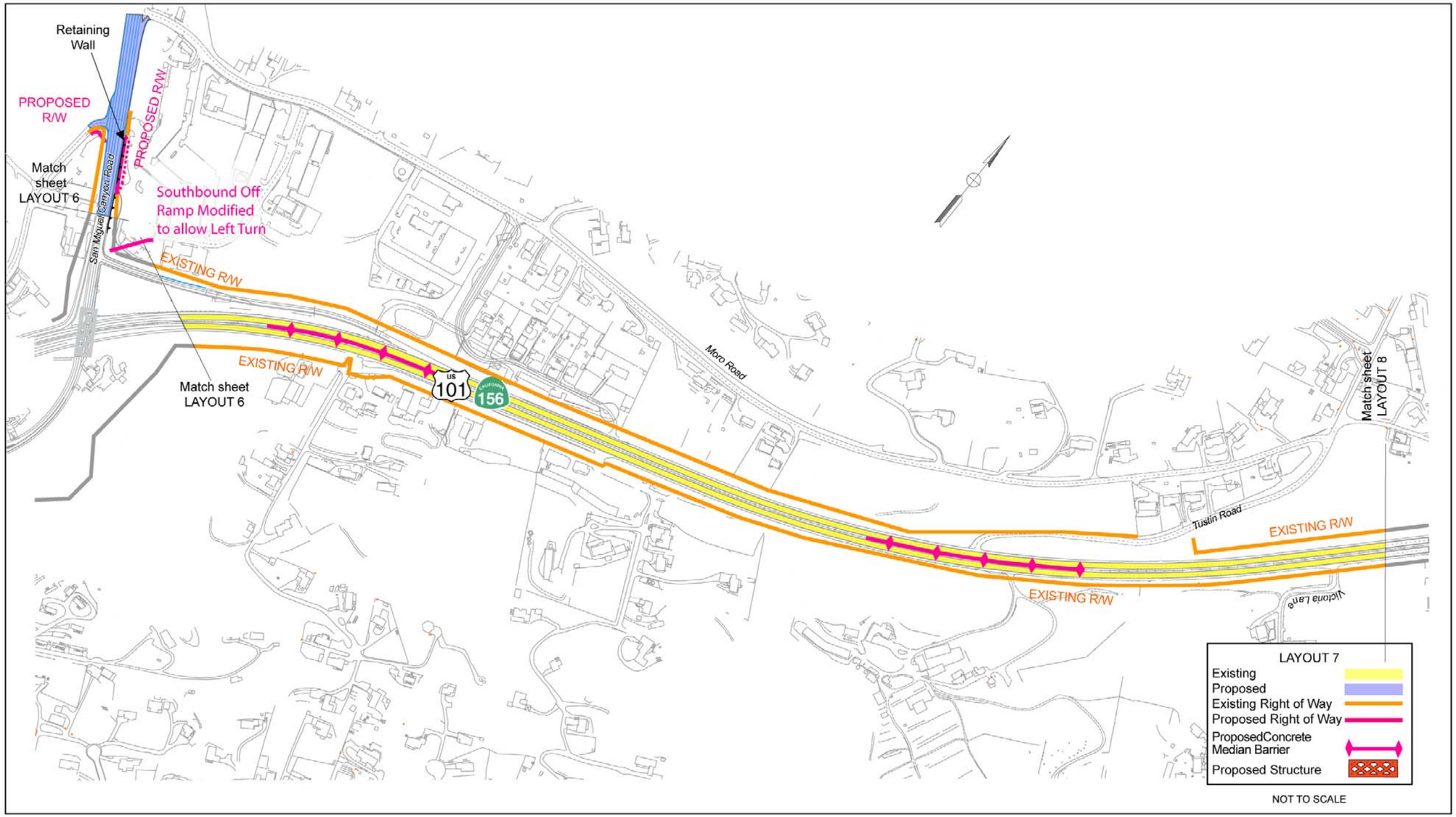

Figure 2-7 Build Alternative Design, San Miguel Canyon Road/Tustin Road Location

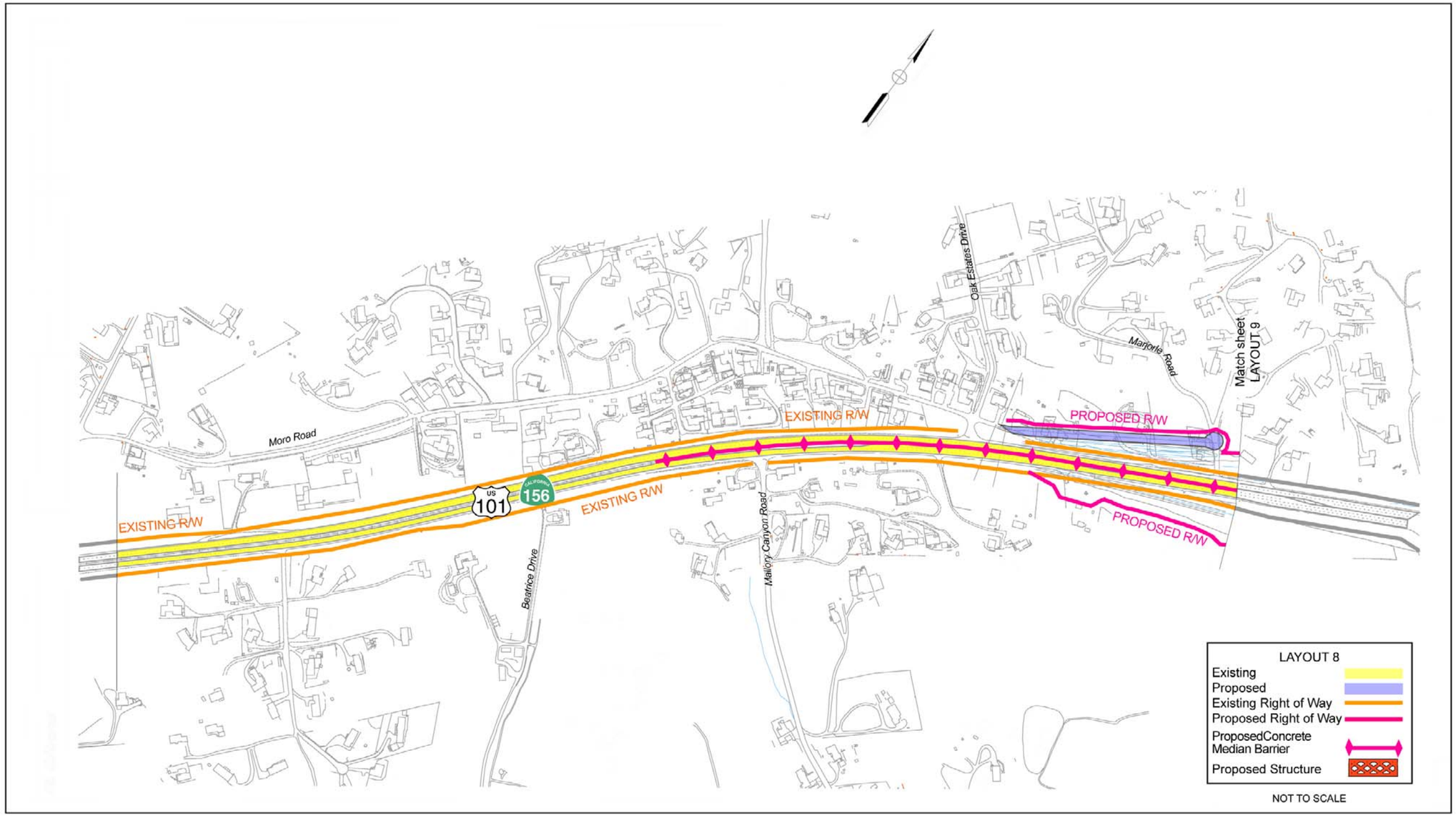

Figure 2-8 Build Alternative Design, Mallory Canyon Road Location

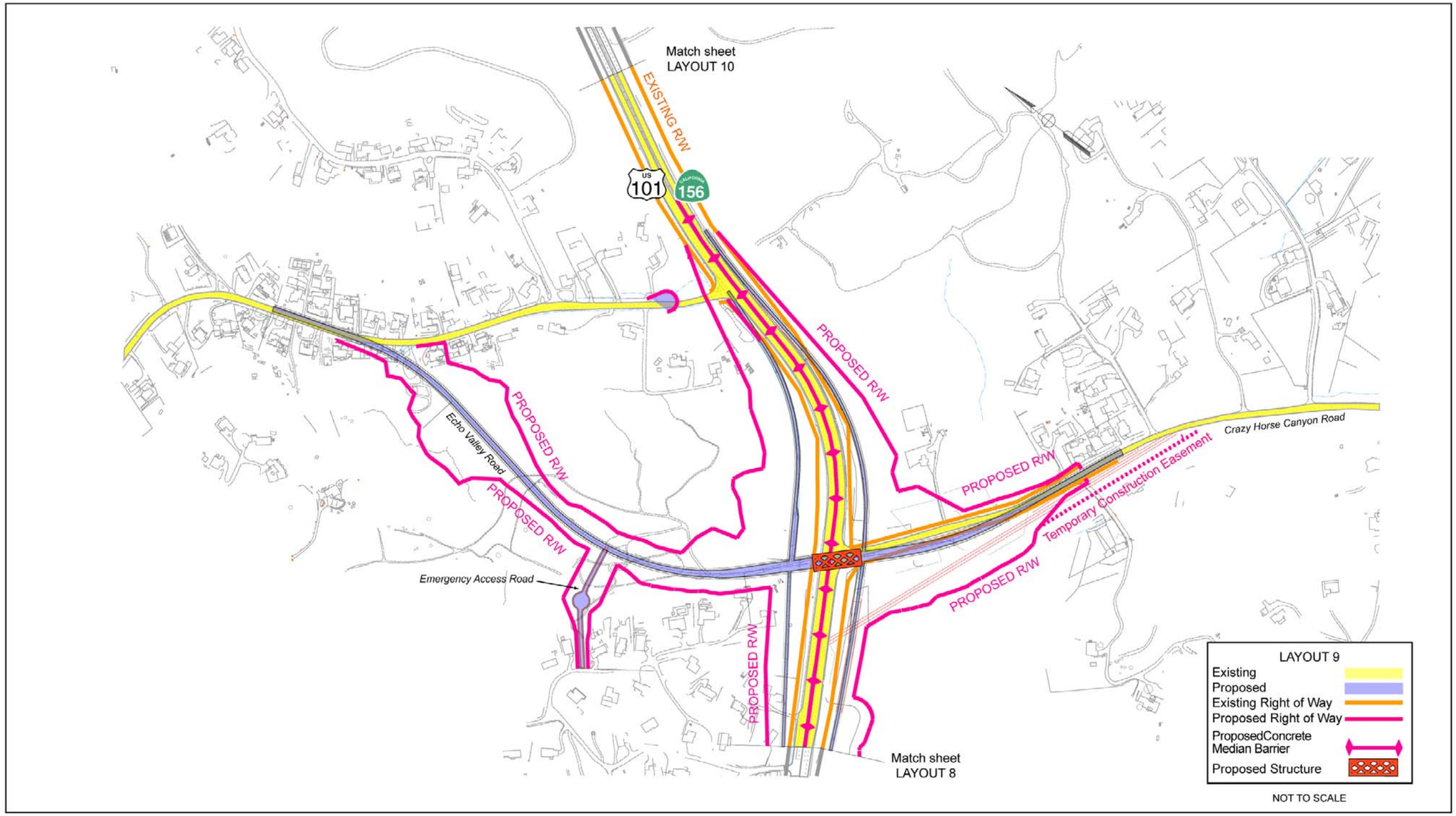

Figure 2-9 Build Alternative Design, Echo Valley Road Location

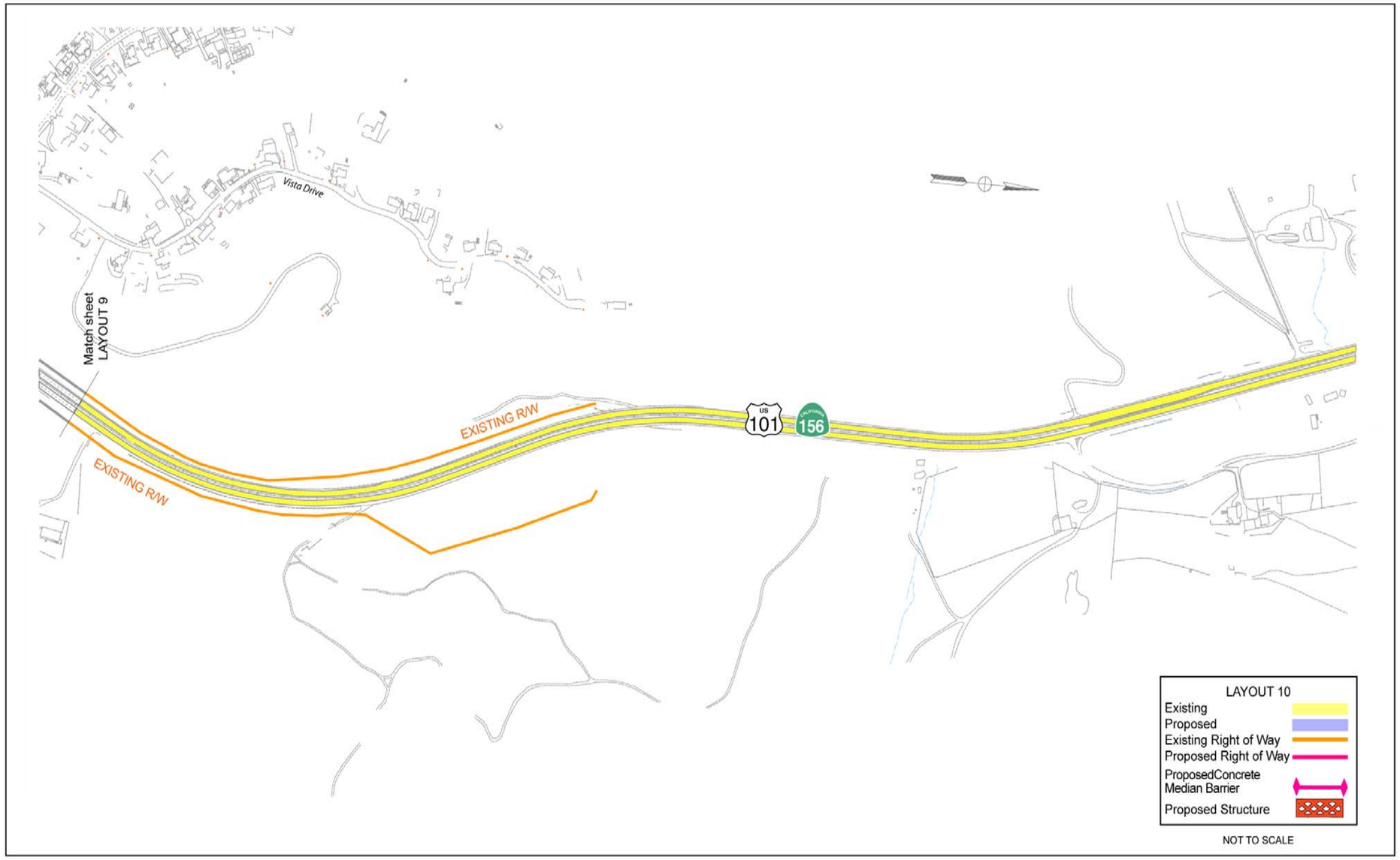

Figure 2-10 Build Alternative Design, North End of Project Limits

2.3 Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn

In 2002, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency of Monterey County recognized that funding was insufficient to implement a Route 101 alternative in the Prunedale area that used either an entirely new alignment or added lanes, and yet the safety issues on the existing highway needed to be addressed. Given the continuing operational and safety improvement needs, this project (the Prunedale Improvement Project) was initiated. The project team examined the operational and safety concerns within the project limits, and incorporated the improvements that best met the purpose and need of the project area: improving safety, operations, and local circulation. Individual areas of concerns were evaluated and removed, and included the following:

- The interchange at Echo/Crazy Horse was redesigned to minimize impacts to wetlands and to provide flexibility for use in future transportation projects. This alternative was withdrawn because an environmentally superior alternative was possible.
- An interchange was proposed at Russell/Espinosa Roads. The interchange was moved north 0.62 mile to minimize potential impacts to residences and businesses, and to meet state and federal highway guidelines that require one mile between urban interchanges. This alternative was withdrawn because an environmentally superior alternative was possible.
- At the south end of the project, a new Route 101 alignment west of the existing roadway was considered. To avoid the removal of residences and potential environmental justice impacts, the route was aligned to the east of the existing roadway. This alternative was withdrawn because an environmentally superior alternative was possible.
- Frontage roads were considered adjacent to the existing Route 101. Because of the potential impacts associated with the frontage roads (e.g., residential and business impacts, and potential farmland impacts), the focus turned to improving existing roads and enhancing local access. This alternative was withdrawn because an environmentally superior alternative was possible.
- A full standard design was considered, one with no features that would be non-standard, yet the cost of this alternative would be excessively higher and it would require a larger project impact area and therefore increase impacts to the environment. This alternative was withdrawn because an environmentally superior alternative was possible.

Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, reviews, certifications, and approvals would be required for project construction:

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 Consultation for Threatened and Endangered Species, issues Biological Opinion	Non-jeopardy Biological Assessment has been submitted, awaiting Biological Opinion to be issued prior to final Environmental Document approval.
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit for filling or dredging waters of the United States.	Application for Section 404 permit would be applied for after the project has been approved.
California Department of Fish and Game	1602 Agreement for Streambed Alteration Section 2080.1 Agreement for Threatened and Endangered Species	Application for 1602 permit submitted after the project has been approved. Section 2080.1 agreement would be initiated after the circulation of the draft Environmental Document.
California Water Resources Board	Section 401 Certification for Water Discharge Requirements	Caltrans has a statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit that is always in affect. A Notification of Construction will be required.

Chapter 3 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis conducted for the project, the following environmental resources were considered, but no potential for adverse impacts to these resources was identified. Consequently, there is no further discussion regarding these resources in this document.

- Cultural Resources – Cultural resource studies conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act determined that no historic properties exist within the area of potential effects for the proposed Prunedale Improvement Project. The *Historic Property Survey Report* put forward a finding of No Historic Properties Affected. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with this finding on January 23,2004 (see Office of Historic Preservation letters, Appendix E).

- Paleontology Resources – No temporary or permanent impacts to Paleontological resources would occur with the proposed project because:

    1. The formations that occur in the project area are considered to have low or no potential for yielding sensitive paleontological resources.
    2. The largest fossil repositories in California have not reported any sensitive paleontological resources from the project area.
    3. Much of the project would be in previously disturbed soils or would involve fill.

This chapter describes the existing resources in the project area and identifies the likely impacts of implementing the proposed project. Each subsection below would describe the present conditions (Affected Environment), discuss the likely impacts of building the proposed project (Impacts), and indicate what measures would be taken to mitigate those impacts (Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures).

Human Environment

3.1 Land Use

Throughout Monterey County and Prunedale, land use patterns appear to be largely responsible for the adverse commute patterns. Rather than a healthful mix of land uses, Monterey County has experienced a segregation of land use types simultaneously at three different scales. At the regional scale, the county provides residential land to serve Santa Clara County's employment centers. At the countywide scale, smaller bedroom communities have developed in locations that are geographically distinct from local employment centers. Lastly, within Prunedale, conventional zoning has segregated residential uses from supporting land uses, such as retail, commercial, schools, and services. These dominant land use patterns necessitate use of private automobiles by most workers and residents, with few other transportation options.

3.1.1 Regulatory Setting

Although the State is not subject to regulation by the Monterey County General Plan, consistency in transportation planning and planned land use is the goal.

3.1.2 Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans

Development in the Prunedale area has been guided mainly by three plans: the 1982 Monterey County General Plan, the 1997 North County Area Plan, and the 2002 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan. The following discusses how the proposed project is consistent with the existing and future land use plans for the Prunedale area.

1982 Monterey County General Plan

The 1982 Monterey County General Plan, though amended over the years, is outdated. Drafts of the new Monterey County 21st Century General Plan have been circulated for public review in 2001, 2003, and 2004. The updated General Plan is expected to be finalized and approved in 2005. Within the project limits, the approved 1982 Monterey County General Plan identifies Route 101 as deficient because of high collision rates. The plan does not specifically identify this project, though it does state that development and circulation patterns need to be designed to maximize the use of local and collector roads for trips within the community, while consolidating access to principal arterial roads and highways for longer distance trips.

Figure 3-1 shows the existing urban (which includes residential) and rural areas. The map includes only two categories because land use designations are still pending the finalization of the Monterey County 21st Century General Plan.

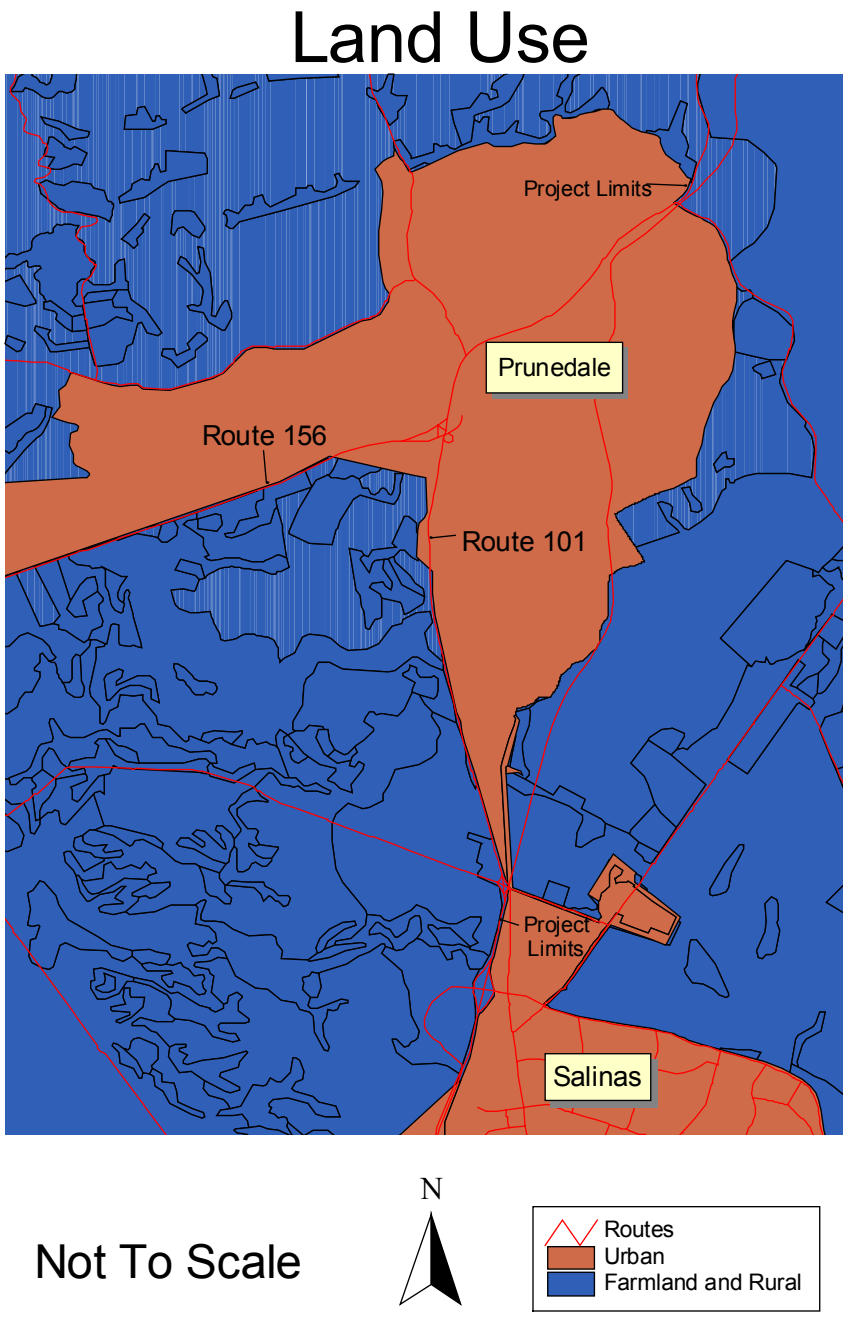

Figure 3-1 Current Land Use in Project Vicinity

1985 North County Area Plan

Within the project limits, the North County Area Plan identifies Route 101 as a segment of highway with increasing traffic congestion and driving conditions that can use improvement. Though the plan does not specifically identify this project, it does state that development and circulation patterns need to be designed to maximize the use of local and collector roads for trips within the community, while consolidating access to principal arterial roads and highways for longer distance trips. Furthermore, the plan acknowledges Caltrans' efforts to upgrade the existing route.

Between 1985 and 1996 the plan was amended several times, identifying 17 areas planned for land use conversions. Of the 17 parcels, 12 were subdivided and developed as residential, and five were converted to commercial.

2002 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan

The 2002 approved Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan identifies Route 101 through North County as a rural four-lane highway. The Plan describes Route 101 through the Prunedale area as congested as a result of considerable truck, inter-city, and inter-county traffic. At-grade intersections and driveways, and the lack of frontage roads for local traffic also affect the roadway's safety and efficiency. High volumes and numerous at-grade intersections with limited sight distance have made left turns to or from the expressway dangerous and difficult, according to the Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan.

Many of the improvements along Route 101 in the project area proposed in the 2002 report have been implemented. In addition, two of the three new interchanges (Russell/Espinosa and Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley) included in this project were identified in the 2002 Plan as part of the Prunedale Freeway Project. Both the 2002 Regional Transportation Plan and the Draft 2005 Regional Transportation Plan stress the need for widening Route 101 to six lanes between Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley and Airport Boulevard in Salinas.

The 2002 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, like the General Plan, is being updated, and exists as a 2005 Draft. The Prunedale Improvement Project is included in this soon-to-be-approved updated 2005 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, and is also in the Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (approval expected in 2005).

Plan Consistency Determination

Based on the increasing traffic congestion and safety concerns, and the county's past, present, and future land use designation trends, the proposed project is expected to be consistent with the Draft 2005 Regional Transportation Plan and consistent with the proposed 21st Century Monterey County General Plan, expected to be finalized in 2005.

3.1.3 Affected Environment

Within the North County Area Plan, approximately 13,031 hectares (32,202 acres) is agricultural and approximately 10,485 hectares (25,907 acres) is residential. Major residential centers are the unincorporated communities of Castroville, Moss Landing, Pajaro, Las Lomas, Aromas, and Prunedale. Approximately 656 hectares (1,620 acres) of land is considered commercial and industrial. Commercial and industrial land uses are concentrated in Castroville, Prunedale, Pajaro, and Moss Landing.

Existing Land Use Along Route 101

The project would include facility upgrades along the existing Route 101 alignment. Table 3.1 shows the existing land use along Route 101

Table 3.1 Existing Land Use Adjacent to Route 101

Location	Residential	Commercial and Industrial	Agricultural
North of Russell/ Espinosa Road	Mobile home park, single-family housing and lots	Mini-storage facility, Towing and transportation operations, Camper sales, Roofing operation, Commercial building sales, Service and retail	Truck crops
South of Russell/ Espinosa Road	Condominiums, multifamily lots, single-family housing and lots	Retail center-Northridge Shopping Center	NA
North of Martines Road	Single-family housing and lots	NA	Dairy
South of Martines Road	Single-family housing and lots; Multi-family lots	Trucking Co	Truck crops
North of Blackie Road/Reese Circle Road	Single-family housing and lots; North County Fire District office; Continuation school, churches	Auto body and painting operation; North Monterey County School District bus maintenance yard	NA
South of Blackie Road/Reese Circle	Single-family housing and lots	Auto repair operation, Veterinary clinic	Grazing land, pasture
North of Route 156 and Vierra Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots, Senior Center, Church, Private schools	Offices, Retail center - Prunetree Shopping Center, Service stations/mini marts	NA
South of Route 156 and Vierra Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots	Construction grading and paving operation, Veterinary clinic	NA

Table 3.1 continued

Location	Residential	Commercial and Industrial	Agricultural
North of San Miguel Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots	Medical clinic, Offices, Retail center-Prunedale Shopping Center, Auto wrecking operation, Lumber yard, Auto repair operation	NA
South of San Miguel Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots Manzanita Regional Park	Retail Center, Offices-Prunedale Plaza	NA
North of Echo Valley/Crazy Horse Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots	NA	NA
South of Echo Valley/Crazy Horse Canyon Road	Single-family housing and lots	NA	NA

Source: Community Impact Assessment, March 2004

Development Trends

The Monterey County North County Area Plan outlines developable land and development trends for the North County Planning Area and the project study area. The holding capacity for these areas is the sum of existing development and potential development allowable under current land use regulations. Development in North County is regulated by the Monterey County Land Use Plan and the Local Coastal Program. As of 1985, there were approximately 24,353 hectares (60,177 acres) of land in North County designated for residential, agricultural, or resource conservation. The County estimates that the 1985 holding capacity for the North County Area was 21,176 homes. This would allow for the construction of 12,956 new housing units (North County Area Plan, 1985). There were also approximately 111 hectares (274 acres) of commercial and 182 hectares (449 acres) of industrial land available for development as of 1985.

Development trends for North County are determined by the land use plan. Rural residential uses (one unit per five acres) are planned for three areas in Prunedale. The first is north of the coastal zone boundary on both sides of San Miguel Canyon Road and extending east to San Juan Road. The next area is in the vicinity of the Highway 101/San Juan Road/Dunbarton Road intersections. The third area includes a large segment of land adjacent to Crazy Horse Canyon Road.

The North County Area Plan has three separate classifications for low-density residential land (one acre per unit). Low-density residential is designated primarily along portions of San Miguel Canyon (east side), Pesante Road, and Reese Circle (north side). One-hectare (two-and-one-half-acre) low-density development

designations exist along much of Vierra and Berta Canyons. Five-acre residential lots are designated between San Miguel Canyon Road and the coastal zone near Prunedale, and south of Pesante Road and Reese Circle.

The North County Area Plan provides for existing commercial centers to be the foundation for expanding commercial development. Existing commercial land within the study area is located in the center of Prunedale at the intersection of Vierra Canyon Road and Route 101. Land zoned for industrial uses in the study area is confined to two existing industrial operations on Crazy Horse Canyon Road.

Within the project limits, the area south of Pesante all the way to the Salinas City Limits is designated as agriculture. In addition, public and quasi-public land is confined to Manzanita Park near San Miguel Canyon Road and solid waste disposal sites on Lewis Road and Crazy Horse Canyon Road.

A large development known as Rancho San Juan has been proposed between Salinas and Prunedale. The proposed development borders Harrison Road on the west, Russell Road on the south, and San Juan Grade Road on the east. The fully developed 1,044-hectare (2,581-acre) site would provide 4,000 residential units distributed over a variety of unit types and sizes, many affordable to low- and moderate-income families. The plan also includes a mixed-use town center and town square with 34,653 square meters (373,000 square feet) of retail/community space, a major employment center with over .22 million square meters (2.4 million square feet) of light industrial/business park use and nearly 22,575 square meters (243,000 square feet) of office development. Recreational facilities include a 79-hectare (196-acre), 18-hole golf course, approximately 30 hectares (75 acres) of public parkland and over 243 hectares (600 acres) of natural or enhanced open space with a trail system.

The Rancho San Juan project was approved by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors in December 2004. However, numerous lawsuits have been filed challenging the Board's approval, and the approval is currently scheduled to be placed on the ballot in the November 2005 general election. Consequently, at the time of this draft environmental document, the Rancho San Juan project is subject to considerable uncertainty. Nevertheless, the future traffic projections in this draft environmental document are based, at least in part, on the assumption that the Rancho San Juan project will be developed as proposed.

3.1.4 Impacts

The proposed project would require acquisition of property currently zoned as low-density residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial. This acquisition would include land adjacent to the existing alignment, areas needed for construction of the interchanges and ramps, and land for local road modifications and drainage basin construction (refer to Section 3.4 for additional detail).

No land would be acquired with the No-Build Alternative and land use would continue as currently zoned.

3.1.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

3.2 Growth

Growth, traffic circulation, and safety have been a concern in the region for many decades, with planning for a Route 101 bypass of Prunedale first beginning in the early 1960s. The north county's population grew from 20,093 in 1970 to 37,624 in 2000, and is expected to increase to 48,145 by 2020. This population growth, combined with increased traveler commutes and dispersed zoning patterns, appears to be the cause of the project area's over-burdened road system.

3.2.1 Regulatory Setting

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations, which implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, require evaluation of the potential environmental consequences of all proposed federal activities and programs. This provision includes a requirement to examine indirect consequences, which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action and at some time in the future. Secondary impacts may include changes in land use, economic vitality, and population density, which are all elements of growth.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the analysis of a project's potential to induce growth. California Environmental Quality Act guidelines, Section 15126.2(d), require that environmental documents "…discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment…"

3.2.2 Affected Environment

Prunedale and the North Monterey County region have experienced an increase in land use conversions and in traffic/safety concerns over the years. Since 1982, when the North County Area Plan was developed, residential land use designation has increased by 10,000 hectares (24,711 acres), planned commercial areas have tripled in size, and industrial land use has doubled. This growth has had an effect on local and interregional roads.

The congested traffic conditions that exist on many of the county's roads and highways appear to have their origin in several sources. The first source is that the local roads were designed to serve fundamentally rural demands, but now serve high traffic volumes. Second, due to housing costs and lack of housing, residents have to commute to work both within the county and to other counties. Third, one of the most important causes of overcrowded roads appears to be related to the type of developments that have been approved. Within the project area, conventional subdivisions tend to be purely residential in character and exclude a mix of complementary land uses such as schools, retail shopping, employment centers, and other community serving uses. This zoning strategy makes trips outside the subdivision necessary for almost every need on a daily basis.

As described in Section 3.1, Land Use, the Monterey County North County Area Plan outlines developable land and development trends for the North County Planning Area and the project study area. The holding capacity for these areas is the sum of existing development and potential development allowable under current land use regulations. Development in North County is regulated by the Monterey County Land Use Plan and the Local Coastal Program.

3.2.3 Impacts

Growth inducement can occur when a specific project provides access to previously inaccessible locations. For example, for this project the proposed new interchange (overcrossing) for the new local road north of Russell/Espinosa could provide better access to land adjacent to Route 101. This access could put growth pressure on the land. In addition to access to land, growth pressure could occur if a project substantially reduces traveler commute times.

There is an open question as to whether improved access in an area where there is existing access can lead to growth inducement. Some studies have shown that people make choices about where to live and work independent of a lack of traffic

congestion in corridors that they will use. Furthermore, growth can only occur if permitted by local agencies through the general planning process, as well as the specific development approvals.

In April 2001, a growth inducement study was conducted for the Prunedale Freeway Project (Prunedale Growth Inducement Research, 2001). For the purposes of this analysis, data was used for the growth study from Alternative 2. Alternative 2 proposed to upgrade existing Route 101 into a six-lane freeway. Similar to the Prunedale Improvement Project, Alternative 2 proposed constructing new interchanges at Russell/Espinosa Roads, Blackie Road/Reese Circle, and Crazy Horse Canyon Roads, as well as closing several access points onto Route 101 from existing driveways and local roads. In addition to using the Prunedale Growth Inducement Research Study, a Caltrans Transportation Planner was interviewed to determine the proposed developments (based on the 2005 Draft Monterey General Plan) within the project area.

The Prunedale Growth Inducement Research Study was based on an analysis of travel time from job centers to areas subject to residential growth pressure. For this project, travel time is a key component for growth analysis due to driver behavior. For example, Prunedale real estate is less expensive than real estate in the San Jose or Monterey Peninsula areas. Given this, individuals may have to commute to the Prunedale area for affordable housing. If this project were to substantially reduce travel times from job-rich areas, growth pressure could increase.

Within the project limits three areas where identified as areas for potential growth: North, Central, and South Prunedale. In addition, several potential employment centers outside of Prunedale were identified as possible daily commute destinations: Seaside, Salinas, San Juan Bautista, Gilroy, Santa Cruz, Sunnyvale, Milpitas, Campbell, and Coyote Valley. Traffic engineers updated average travel times to and from these locations based on the proposed project and current traffic volume information.

The Growth Model took average travel times between each area in Prunedale and potential job centers. For example, when comparing the build versus no-build alternatives for the Prunedale Improvement Project, a typical commuter would save 0.0 minutes when traveling between Gilroy and South Prunedale (Table 3.2). In comparison, the 2001 Prunedale Growth Inducement Research Study indicated that Alternative 2 of the Prunedale Freeway project would save a typical commuter only

30 seconds in travel time compared to the No-Build Alternative. The data in Table 3.2 indicates that overall travel time saving for the Prunedale Improvement Project would be minor when compared to the No-Build Alternative. This suggests that the savings in travel time would not be enough to lead to growth in the Prunedale area. Furthermore, since this project is not capacity increasing (safety and operational improvements only), the Level of Service experienced on Route 101 should remain constant.

Table 3.2 Growth Model Travel Times (AM and PM)

Employment Centers (AM)	North Prunedale (time in minutes)		Central Prunedale (time in minutes)		South Prunedale (time in minutes)	
	No-Build	Build	No-Build	Build	No-Build	Build
Gilroy	22.2	23.1	23.3	23.3	22.8	22.8
Watsonville	17.6	17.6	18.7	18.8	19.9	20.0
Santa Cruz	40.5	40.2	41.6	41.4	42.8	42.6
Hollister Area	24.2	25.2	25.3	25.3	24.8	24.8
Castroville	11.5	11.2	8.4	8.4	8.0	8.1
Rancho San Juan	10.5	11.1	7.5	7.9	4.5	4.5
NE Salinas	12.2	12.2	9.2	9.2	7.2	8.0
SE Salinas	18.1	18.0	15.1	15.0	13.0	13.8
Central Salinas	14.2	14.2	11.2	11.2	9.2	9.9
SW Salinas	15.5	15.4	12.5	12.4	10.4	11.1
Monterey	33.5	33.5	30.4	30.4	30.0	30.2
Employment Centers (PM)	**North Prunedale (time in minutes)**		**Central Prunedale (time in minutes)**		**South Prunedale (time in minutes)**	
	No-Build	**Build**	**No-Build**	**Build**	**No-Build**	**Build**
Gilroy	23.1	24.0	24.3	24.3	23.9	23.9
Watsonville	15.8	15.8	16.9	17.0	18.2	18.3
Santa Cruz	35.6	35.6	36.8	36.8	38.0	38.1
Hollister Area	27.9	29.0	29.1	29.3	28.7	28.9
Castroville	11.5	11.5	8.4	8.4	8.0	8.1
Rancho San Juan	10.7	11.5	7.6	7.9	4.5	4.5
NE Salinas	13.7	13.2	10.6	10.1	8.4	8.8
SE Salinas	18.9	18.6	15.8	15.5	13.6	14.1
Central Salinas	15.0	14.7	11.9	11.6	9.7	10.3
SW Salinas	16.3	16.0	13.2	12.8	11.0	11.5
Monterey	31.7	31.7	28.6	28.6	28.2	28.4

In addition to travel time, growth could occur in the vicinity of the new interchanges because of improved access to adjacent land. According to the 2005 Draft Monterey County General Plan, the following areas have been identified for development:

- The Salinas General Plan identifies an 853-unit residential development located southeast of the intersection of Boronda Road and Route 101.

- Rancho San Juan development, located northeast of the Russell Road/Espinosa Road/Route 101 intersection. The development borders Harrison Road on the west, Russell Road on the south, and San Juan Grade Road on the east. The fully developed 1,044-hectare (2,581-acre) site would provide 4,000 residential units distributed over a variety of unit types and sizes, many affordable to low- and moderate-income families. The plan also includes a mixed-use town center and town square with 34,653 square meters (373,000 square feet) of retail/community space, a major employment center with over .22 million square meters (2.4 million square feet) of light industrial/business park use and nearly 22,575 square meters (243,000 square feet) of office development. Recreational facilities include a 79-hectare (196-acre), 18-hole golf course, approximately 30 hectares (75 acres) of public parkland, and over 243 hectares (600 acres) of natural or enhanced open space with a trail system.
- Several areas adjacent to the project limits are zoned commercial and residential, but are currently undeveloped. The general plan has approved those vacant lots for commercial and residential in-fill.

Given that areas have already been identified for development, this project would be part of the planning process and not the catalyst for unplanned growth.

The Growth Model study indicates that, due to current land use planning and the fact that North and Central Prunedale are considered "built out" by those representing the community, growth pressure would not increase in these areas. The study also suggests that commuter time reductions would be minimal. Therefore, no substantial change in long-distance commuter patterns would be expected. Growth in Prunedale would continue to be guided by local and regional land use plans (see Section 3.1, Land Use).

With the No-Build Alternative, growth pressure on undeveloped land would continue to be strong, as with the proposed project, guided by local and regional land use plans.

3.2.4 Cumulative Impacts

Based on what is projected in both the Monterey County General Plan and North County Area Plans, for the Prunedale area, and the results of the growth model reported above, the growth-inducing potential of this project would be minimal. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that public agencies would still be able to provide essential services.

3.3 Farmlands/Agricultural Lands

Agriculture, consisting of crop farming and livestock grazing, is the largest industry in Monterey County. The number of acres of land dedicated to agriculture has remained stable. According to the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 528,376 hectares (1,305,631 acres) of land was dedicated to agriculture in 1992, decreasing slightly to 525,409 hectares (1,298,301 acres) in 2002, an approximately ½ percent drop.

3.3.1 Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act and the Farmland Protection Policy Act (USC 4201-4209; and its regulations, 7 CFR Ch. VI Part 658) require federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, to coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service if their activities may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use. For purposes of the Farmland Protection Policy Act, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. The land does not currently have to be used for cropland. It can be forestland, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban developed land.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the review of projects that would convert Williamson Act contract land to non-agricultural uses. The main purposes of the Williamson Act are to preserve agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to deter the early conversion of agricultural and open space lands to other uses.

3.3.2 Affected Environment

Agriculture represents over 40 percent of Monterey County's total economy and has made it the number one vegetable-producing region in the nation. Monterey County supplies 80 percent of the nation's lettuces and nearly the same percentage of artichokes, in addition to other vegetables. Monterey County has become one of the largest premium grape growing regions in California, with 16,188 hectares (40,000 acres) of wine grapes. Monterey County crop production and value-added agricultural products exceed a value of $10-$12 billion per year (Prunedale Improvement Project Community Impact Assessment, March 2004).

The project study area consists of 220.7 acres of farmland, a smaller portion of which is under Williamson Act contract.

The 21st Century Monterey County General Plan now in revision is anticipated to include policies to protect agricultural operations. The State is not subject to regulation by the local General Plan.

3.3.3 Impacts

The Natural Resource Conservation Service determined that of the total 37.64 hectares (93 acres) of farmland that would be converted for the project, 15.7 hectares (38.8 acres) are prime and unique, and 2.3 hectares (5.6 acres) are of statewide or local importance. The 37.64 hectares (93 acres) to be converted would be 0.0001 percent of the total county farmland (see Figure 3-2).

The proposed project scored 138 out of 260 points on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (see Appendix D). Under the national Farmland Protection Policy Act, a score of at least 160 points is necessary to indicate substantial farmland impacts. This score is reported on a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006) that has been filled out and submitted to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Salinas. This form is to be used by federal agencies or for federally funded projects that may convert farmland, as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act, to nonagricultural uses.

As stated in Section 3.3.1, Williamson Act contract land preserves agricultural and open space land by the county providing incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to deter the early conversion of agricultural and open space lands to other uses. Of the 15.7 hectares (38.8 acres) to be converted, approximately 14.8 hectares (36.7 acres) are Williamson Act contract lands from five parcels.

No farmland would be converted for transportation use under the No-Build Alternative.

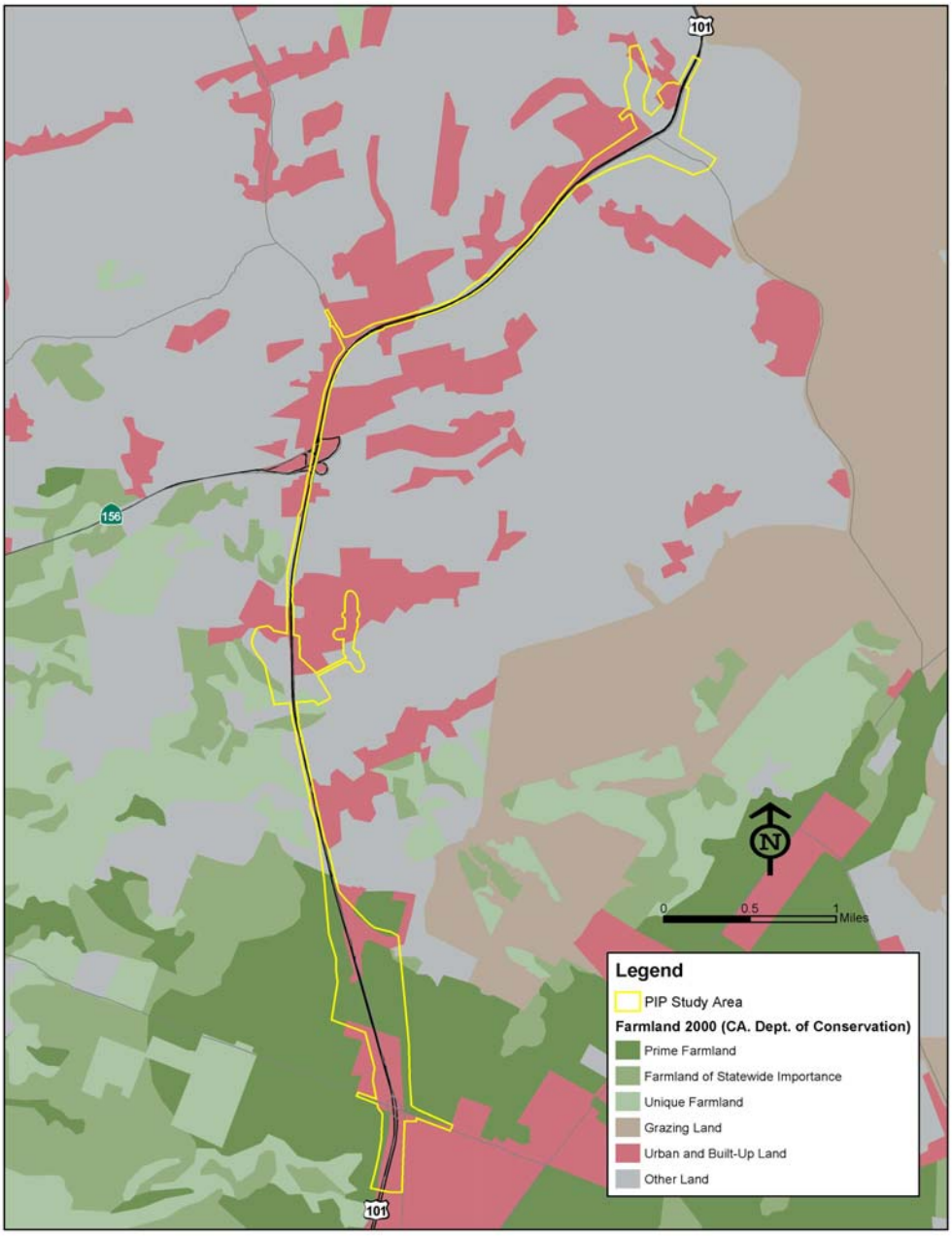

Figure 3-2 Farmland

3.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

When designing the project, engineers avoided and minimized impacts to farmland by proposing a design that would require the smallest possible project footprint. The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating point total for the project was 138, with 15.7 hectares (38.8 acres) of prime and unique farmland being converted. This indicates that farmland impacts are not substantial and that mitigation would not be required.

3.4 Community Impacts

A project's effect on a community can occur through business and residential relocations, change in community character, and the disproportionate effects on low-income or minority individuals.

3.4.1 Relocations

Residential or business relocations could occur if a transportation project has a footprint that requires new right-of-way.

3.4.1.1 Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended, established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings [42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)]. The Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act [23 U.S.C. 109(h)] directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion, and the availability of public facilities and services.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act, an economic or social change by itself is not to be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, if a social or economic change is related to a physical change, then social or economic change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Since this project would result in physical change to the environment, it is appropriate to consider changes to community character and cohesion in assessing the significance of the project's effects.

Please refer to Appendices B and C for Caltrans policy and a Summary of Relocation Benefits.

3.4.1.2 Affected Environment

Housing in the project area is primarily single family and varies widely in age and style. It includes everything from simple wood cabins, small stucco, and wood-sided homes, 37 to 111 square meters (400 to 1200 square feet), to large, traditional style or very modern homes, 149 to 372 square meters (1600 to 4000 square feet). The setting of these homes is equally mixed, including both eight-hectare (20-acre) or larger rural parcels, as well as lots. There are few curbs or sidewalks in residential areas and only a few multi-family units nearer the southern end of the project.

Retail businesses, particularly the regional chains, are concentrated in the two shopping centers at Vierra Canyon and San Miguel Canyon Roads. The majority of commercial buildings outside the shopping centers are as varied in construction and architectural style as the residential properties, and tend to support mainly locally owned businesses. Outside the shopping center areas, offices, and commercial properties (i.e. auto service, wrecking and body repair, medical clinic, lumber yard, mini-storage facilities, etc.) are located near Route 101 and Russell Espinosa at the south end of the project, and in clusters near Blackie Road and San Miguel Canyon Road in the center of the project.

3.4.1.3 Impacts

A Draft Relocation Impact Study (December 2003) was completed to provide Caltrans, local agencies, and the public with information about the displacement of existing structures and their occupants. The study described the structure and population demographics of each potential displacement and assessed the availability of residential and non-residential units in the area.

The assessment was based on field observations, interviews with real estate professionals, and secondary source information.

Construction of the Prunedale Improvement Project would require the acquisition of 39 residential properties of which 37 are single-family residential units and two are multi-family residential units. Seven businesses would also be acquired by the project. Relocation costs are estimated at $8,851,000. Table 3.3 shows the number and type of proposed acquisitions.

Table 3.3 Proposed Property Acquisitions

Potential Acquisition	Property Type	Full or Partial Acquisition
7	Businesses	Full
36	Single-Family homes	Full
1	Mobile Home	Full
1	Duplex	Full
1	Single-residence apartment (conversion of a garage)	Full

No relocations or property acquisition would be necessary with the No-Build Alternative.

3.4.1.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

According to the December 2004 Draft Relocation Study, adequate relocation resources for homeowners and renters exist within the affected area. According to data obtained from the Monterey County Board of Realtors for December 2003, about 154 single-family residential properties and two multi-family residences were available for sale in Prunedale and North Monterey County. Rental properties in equivalent cost ranges in the Prunedale and North Monterey County area included 17 single-family residential and 11 multi-family residential properties. An active real estate market also exists in Salinas.

All displacees would be contacted by a Caltrans Relocation Agent, who would ensure that eligible displacees receive their full relocation benefits, including advisory assistance. All activities would be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Relocation resources would be available to all displacees free of discrimination.

Also, the Monterey County Housing Authority has programs available to assist tenants with low or moderate incomes.

3.4.2 Community Character and Cohesion

Community character and cohesion can best be described as “the feeling of community” experienced by residents. The sense of community can be based on local churches, business centers, neighborhoods, or other features important to local residents.

3.4.2.1 Affected Environment

Three communities, or centers, were identified within the project vicinity. Within each of those communities are neighborhoods with distinct characteristics that could be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed project (see Figure 3-3). The first community is located on the west side of Route 101 between San Miguel Canyon Road and Echo Valley Road. The center of the community is a business and park area located on San Miguel Canyon Road just west of Route 101. The business area is made up of a regional library, grocery, and many other basic services. The Manzanita Regional Park is a popular destination for local recreation.

The second community is located east of Route 101, described as the Vierra Canyon area. The community center is located at the intersection of Vierra Canyon Road and Route 101, where a gas station and neighborhood shopping center are located. The third community is located east of Route 101 in the Pesante Road area. This community is characterized by an elementary school and fire station surrounded by a small neighborhood of houses.

Residents throughout the Prunedale area identified Route 101 as their main thoroughfare because it provides primary access to local businesses and residential roads and serves public transit needs. Because of dense high-speed traffic associated with the highway, the route is also seen as a physical division throughout the Prunedale community. Population characteristics for the project area are shown in Table 3.4 at the end of this section.

3.4.2.2 Impacts

The proposed over-crossings and interchanges would help reduce the effect of Route 101's physical division of the community (see Figures 2-1 through 2-10, project design, in Chapter 2). For example, the overcrossings just south of Blackie Road and at Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Roads, and the elevation of Route 101 at Russell/Espinosa Roads would allow for access across Route 101 without out-of-direction travel or dangerous at-grade crossings.

Addition of a new road extending Pollock Lane through to Cross Road with intersections at Pesante Road, Orchard Lane, and Cross Road would enhance local circulation among residential properties within the area. Residents would be able to cross either the east or west sides of Route 101 using the new overcrossing and local road systems.

Negative impacts have not been identified for disruption of community cohesion. Given these changes would improve circulation, safety, and access on both sides of Route 101, the improvements could be considered beneficial.

With the No-Build Alternative, residents of the Prunedale area would continue to need to access Route 101 to travel through the community. Internal, local road connections north and south or east and west across Route 101 would continue to be minimal to non-existent.

3.4.2.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

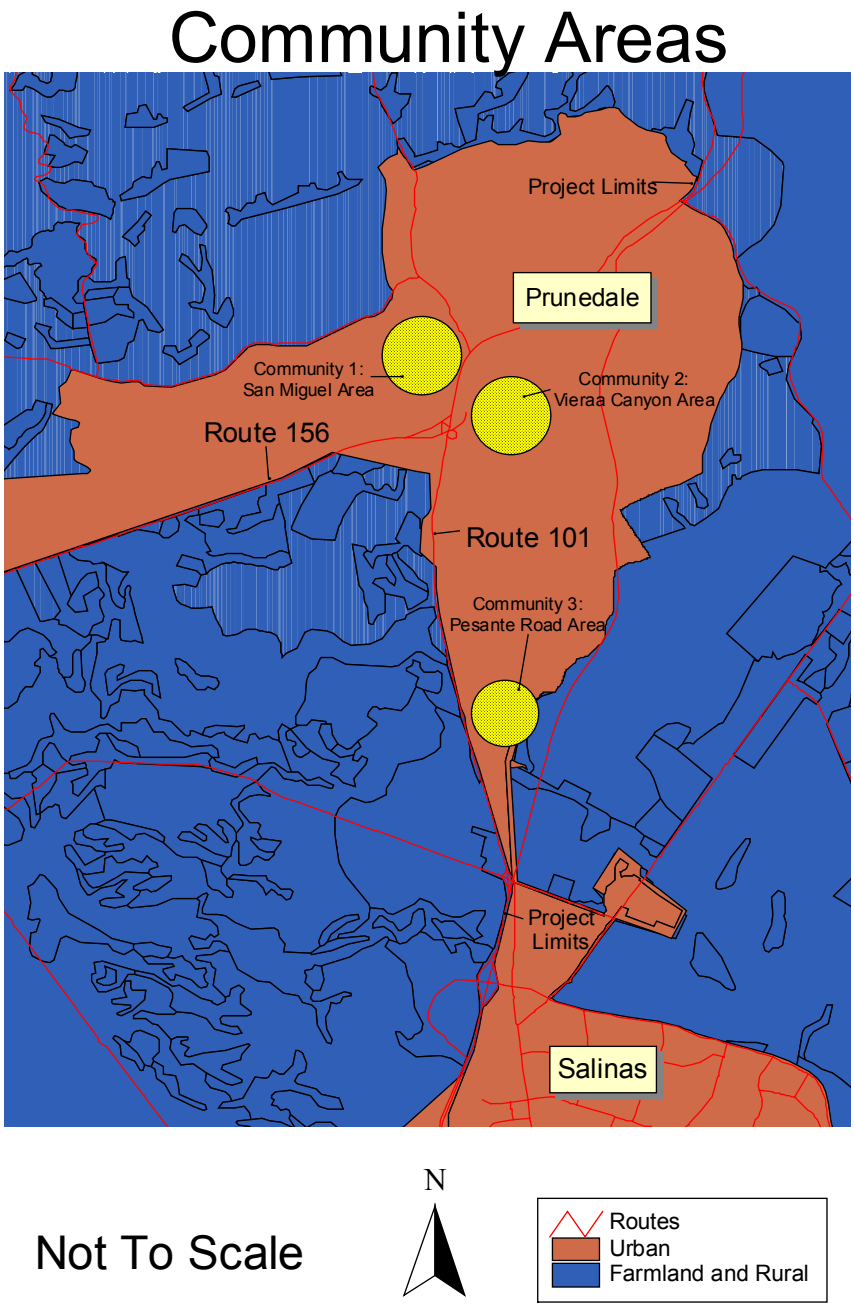

Figure 3-3 Community Boundaries

Table 3.4 Demographics

2000 U.S. Census Data	Proposed Project Area	Prunedale	Monterey County
Total Population	20,669	16,432	401,762
Age (Years)			
Under 5	6.6%	5.4%	7.8%
5-19	24.4%	23.7%	23.8%
20-44	34.0%	32.0%	39.0%
45-54	17.0%	19.0%	12.3%
55 and Over	18.0%	20.0%	17.1%
Ethnicity and Race			
Hispanic	34.5%	23.0%	46.8%
White	56.3%	68.0%	40.3%
Black/African-American	1.4%	1.2%	3.5%
American Indian, Eskimo	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%
Asian	3.3%	3.3%	5.8%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Other Race	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Two or More Races	0.2%	3.4%	2.5%
Family Household Income			
Less than $10,000	2.8%	4.2%	4.5%
$10,000-$14,999	3.0%	1.5%	4.2%
$15,000-$24,999	7.3%	6.5%	10.3%
$25,000-$34,999	6.9%	6.2%	11.8%
$35,000-$49,999	15.5%	12.4%	17.8%
$50,000-$74,999	22.0%	24.1%	21.3%
$75,000-$99,999	20.1%	18.6%	13.3%
$100,000-$149,999	14.6%	18.8%	10.8%
$150,000-or more	7.4%	7.7%	6.1%
Non-Family Household Income			
Less than $10,000	4.3%	4.7%	6.4%
$10,000-$14,999	3.4%	2.5%	4.9%
$15,000-$24,999	9.2%	8.0%	11.2%
$25,000-$34,999	14.3%	7.5%	12.0%
$35,000-$49,999	17.5%	14.1%	17.3%
$50,000-$74,999	20.3%	23.7%	20.9%
$75,000-$99,999	16.3%	15.7%	11.9%
$100,000-$149,999	12.3%	17.0%	9.8%
$150,000-or more	6.3%	6.6%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, www.census.gov

3.4.3 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice ensures that low-income and minority populations are considered, and not disproportionately affected as a result a proposed project.

3.4.3.1 Regulatory Setting

All projects involving a federal action (funding, permit, or land) must comply with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,* signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994. This Executive Order directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. Low income is defined based on the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. For 2004, the poverty line is $18,850 for a family of four.

All considerations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes have also been included in this project. Caltrans commitment to upholding the mandates of Title VI is evidenced by its Title VI Policy Statement, signed by the Director, which can be found in Appendix B of this document.

3.4.3.2 Affected Environment

Caltrans researched the demographics of minority and low-income populations within the project area. U.S. Census data was examined for the five census tracts shown in Figure 3-4 (102.02, 103.02, 103.05, 105.01, and 105.04) that include the project area, as well as more detailed data from census blocks, when available. Census data in some categories was also identified for Prunedale and Monterey County.

Eighty-seven to 91 percent of the population in the project area, as well as in Prunedale and Monterey County, is either White or Hispanic (Table 3.4). The ratio of Hispanic to White in Prunedale is 23.0 percent Hispanic to 68.0 percent White, the project area is 34.5 percent Hispanic to 56.3 percent White, and Monterey County is 46.8 percent Hispanic to only 40.3 percent White.

Of the other four categories identified in the U.S. Census (Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander), no single group constitutes more that 3.3 percent of the populations of Prunedale or the project area. Monterey County's Asian population reaches 5.8 percent, Black/African American is 3.5 percent, and the remaining two groups are both only 0.4 percent.

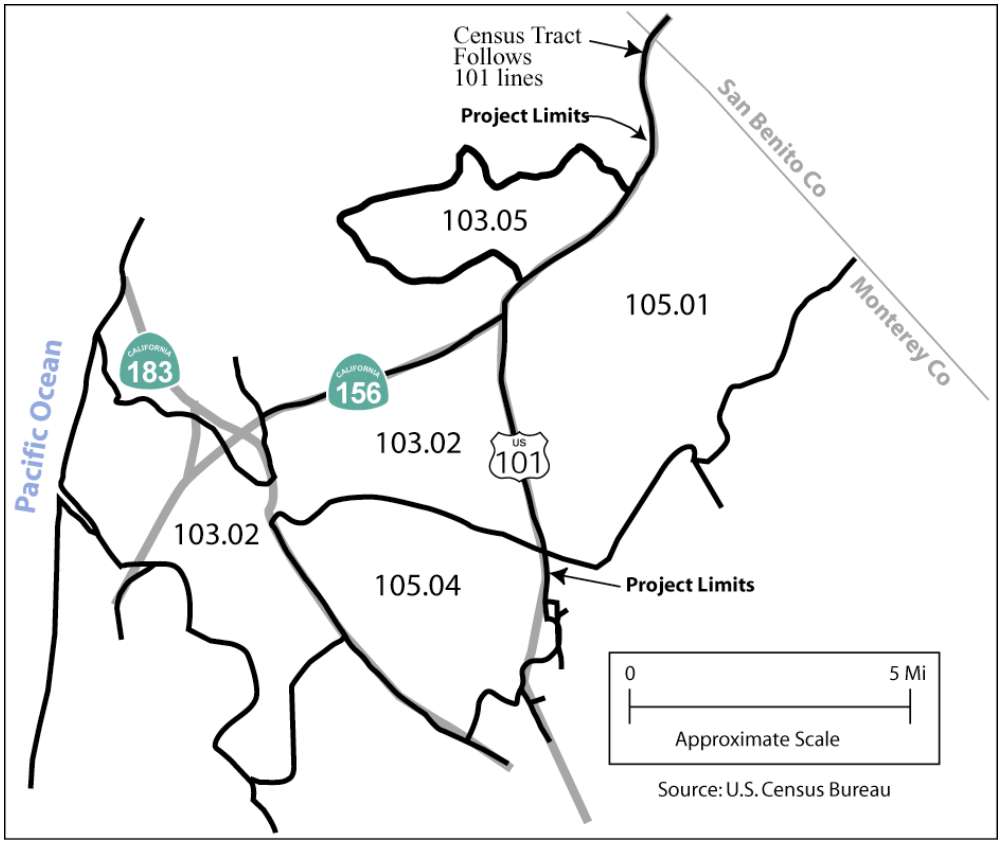

Figure 3-4 U.S. Census Blocks in the Project Area

Census data for race and ethnicity is available at the level of census blocks. Twelve census blocks in the project area contain parcels from which right-of-way acquisition would be necessary to construct the proposed project. Table 3.5 shows the racial and ethnic distribution for those 12 census blocks, as well as for Monterey County, Prunedale, and the project area affected). The data is shown as a percent of the total population with the equivalent number of individuals in parentheses. Only two census blocks would indicate a concentration of Hispanic minorities: Census Tract 105.04, Block 4007 is shown as being 100 percent Hispanic with a total population of only 6 individuals, and Census Tract 105.01, Block 1022 with a total population of 13, indicates a 76.9 percent Hispanic population. Otherwise, the percentage of Hispanic to White indicates mixed neighborhoods. Field reviews of the project area tend to confirm that the ratio of Hispanic population to White may be higher in the southern portion of the project area, but is generally distributed throughout the total area.

Table 3.5 Minority Population Distribution

Census Tract/ Block	Total Popula-tion	Hispanic % (ind)	White % (ind)	Black/ African American % (ind)	American Indian, Eskimo % (ind)	Asian % (ind)	Hawaiian, Pacific Islander % (ind)
103.02/ 2007	263	26.6 (70)	58.6 (154)	--	1.9 (5)	4.2 (11)	--
103.02/ 2019	37	40.5 (15)	56.8 (21)	--	--	--	--
103.05/ 3000	770	20.6 (159)	70.6 (544)	2.2 (17)	0.8 (6)	2.1 (16)	0.1 (1)
105.01/ 1020	7	57.1 (4)	42.9 (3)	--	--	--	--
105.01/ 1021	216	57.4 (124)	35.6 (77)	--	--	--	--
105.01/ 1022	13	76.9 (10)	38.5 (5)	--	--	--	--
105.01/ 3002	210	16.2 (34)	72.9 (153)	1.0 (2)	0.5 (1)	2.9 (6)	0.5 (1)
105.01/ 4000	445	24.0 (107)	68.5 (305)	0.7 (3)	0.2 (1)	4.0 (18)	--
105.01/ 4001	239	16.7 (40)	74.9 (179)	--	0.8 (2)	3.8 (9)	1.3 (3)
105.01/ 4002	31	19.4 (6)	67.7 (21)	--	--	12.9 (4)	--
105.01/ 4007	6	100.0 (6)	--	--	--	--	--
105.04/ 1000	109	55.0 (60)	45.0 (49)	--	--	--	--
Prune-dale	7,393	23.0 (1,700)	68.0 (5,027)	1.2 (89)	0.7 (52)	3.3 (244)	0.2 (15)
Project Area	20,669	34.5 (7,130)	56.3 (11,637)	1.4 (289)	0.7 (145)	3.3 (682)	0.2 (41)
Mon-terey County	355,660	46.8 (166,449)	40.3 (143,331)	3.5 (12,448)	0.4 (1,423)	5.8 (20,628)	0.4 (1,423)

Source: U.S. Census 2000, ind=individual

Census data indicates the Asian minority populations are located in large census blocks in the central and northern sections of the project, both east and west of Route 101: Census Tract 103.02, Block 2007; 103.05, Block 3000; and Census Tract 105.01, Block 4000. Other than the Hispanic populations discussed in the preceding paragraph, field reviews did not identify concentrations of Asian or other ethnic minorities within the project area.

The 2000 U.S. Census provides income or poverty data only at the census tract level. According to that data, Census Tract 103.02 and 105.04 have a percentage of individuals below the poverty level substantially higher than Prunedale or the project area: 11.0 percent and 9.8 percent versus 6.0 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively. Both census tracts cover large areas west of Route 101 from the southern end of the project to approximately Blackie Road. Field reviews identified one potential low-income concentration in the northwest corner of Espinosa Road and Route 101.

3.4.3.3 Impacts

The proposed project would require right-of-way acquisition from 99 separate parcels. Of those 99 parcels, 81 are residential properties. Based on a survey of surnames and estimates of acquisition need, approximately 22 percent or 18 properties are owned by Hispanics and less than a third of those are likely to require more than a small portion of the total property. The ownership survey did not identify surnames that could be attributed to any other minority group and, as stated in the preceding section, field reviews did not identify concentrations of other minority groups.

Another 40 of the 81 residential properties are in the eight blocks of Census Tract 105.01, approximately 5 of which would require relocating the residents. The remaining 23 right-of-way acquisitions are distributed through the other three Census Tracts.

Other than Hispanics, which the data would indicate are affected by the project at percentages lower than that of the total population, the percentage of minorities in any affected Census Block is so small as to make unlikely a disproportionate impact to any of these minority groups.

The one area of potential low-income populations identified in field reviews was not affected by any right-of-way acquisition for the proposed project.

Based on the level of impacts to minority and low-income populations, it is not probable that there would be disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects resulting from the proposed project.

The No-Build Alternative would not change the conditions currently experienced by any minority or low-income populations.

3.4.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

3.5 Utility/Emergency Services

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The proposed project area is primarily rural countryside. The North County Fire Protection District provides emergency services north of Martines Road to the Monterey County line and the Salinas Rural Fire Protection District controls emergency services from south of Martines Road to the end of the proposed project. The Salinas Rural Fire Protection District contracts this area to the Salinas City Fire Department.

The following utilities would be relocated:

- Electric
- Underground gas pipes
- Cable
- Telephone

3.5.2 Impacts

The proposed project would provide emergency services, such as fire, police, and ambulance, with more efficient and safer access to Route 101 and the adjacent residences and businesses. The addition of interchanges, undercrossings, and over-crossings to the area would allow for safer crossing of the highway and better access for emergency services.

During certain phases of construction, alternative routes for emergency services may need to be developed. Caltrans and the North County Fire Department would coordinate route closures and detours during construction. Emergency response time should not be adversely affected.

Utility relocation is anticipated to occur at various locations throughout the project limits. Most of the relocation work would be within the proposed interchange locations. Utility relocations would be within easements adjacent to the proposed right-of-way.

With the No-Build Alternative, emergency services would continue to be restricted to the existing conditions of less efficient and safe access to Route 101. No alternative routes would need to be planned for construction and no utilities would be relocated.

3.5.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

3.6 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

3.6.1 Regulatory Setting

The Federal Highway Administration directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of federal-aid highway projects (see 23 CFR 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the roadway.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration are committed to carrying out the 1990 American with Disabilities Act by building transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. The same degree of convenience, accessibility, and safety available to the general public would be provided to persons with disabilities.

3.6.2 Affected Environment

The project would affect transportation facilities. Modifications to both Route 101 and local roads would improve safety and local circulation.

With the anticipated traffic growth in the region, under the No-Build Alternative traffic congestion would continually worsen though the forecast year of 2030. With the Build Alternative, initially congestion would be reduced, but as time goes on, congested conditions would return.

3.6.3 Impacts

Safety

The project would improve safety by eliminating left-turn movements and thereby reducing the number of traffic conflict points. Closing of all median barrier gaps via the construction of concrete median barriers would eliminate all cross traffic conflicts. The elimination of left-turn movements to and from Route 101 would be mitigated by the construction of two new interchanges, improvements to an existing interchange, and construction of an undercrossing and an overcrossing.

No safety improvements would be made with the No-Build Alternative and accidents would continue to occur at the many traffic conflict points.

Local Circulation

Elimination of the left-turn movements to and from Route 101 would divert local traffic to the two new interchanges, the improved San Miguel Canyon Road interchange, the new overcrossing, and the new undercrossing for local travel and Route 101 access. Once the project is completed, there would be three full-movement local interchanges within the project limits enhancing local circulation:

1) A new interchange approximately 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) north of Russell/Espinosa Roads. (Russell/Espinosa Roads would become a through movement via an undercrossing.)
2) A left-turn movement would be added to the southbound off-ramp of the San Miguel Canyon Road interchange.
3) A new interchange at realigned Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Roads.

Additionally, a new local road overcrossing approximately 305 meters (1,000 feet) south of the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Route 101 intersection would provide local circulation. This access would be approximately midway between the new local road interchange north of Russell/Espinosa Roads and Vierra Canyon Road. New local roads and extensions of existing local roads would mitigate lost access to Route 101 and enable some local travel, currently required to enter the highway, to be conducted off of the highway.

With the No-Build Alternative, no new local circulation improvements would be made. Local residents would continue to have direct access to Route 101, and left-hand turns to and from Route 101 would continue to be permitted.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The project would add pedestrian and bicycle access across Route 101 at the Russell/Espinosa undercrossing, Blackie Road/Reese Circle overcrossing, and Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Roads interchange.

The No-Build Alternative would not provide this additional safe access for pedestrians and bicycles.

3.6.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

3.7 Visual/Aesthetics

The Visual Impact Assessment analyzed environmental data germane to potential visual impacts from the Route 101 Prunedale Improvement Project, based on process guidelines established in the *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Environmental Policy, 1983). The Visual Impact Assessment identifies existing visual resources and their quality within the area, evaluates proposed visual changes - both positive and negative, determines the effect of the proposed permanent visible design features on its viewers, and develops mitigation measures to avoid or minimize negative visual impacts (refer to the Visual Impact Assessment for more details).

3.7.1 Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings [42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)]. To further emphasize this point, the Federal Highway Administration, in its implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act [23 U.S.C. 109(h)], directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest, taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

Likewise, the California Environmental Quality Act establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state "with…enjoyment of *aesthetic*, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities" [CA Public Resources Code Section 21001(b)].

3.7.2 Affected Environment

A Visual Impact Assessment was conducted for the project (September 22, 2004). The report indicated the project is located in the agricultural and wooded hills of northern Monterey County. Prunedale consists primarily of rural residential subdivisions, with clusters of dense suburban, commercial, and light industrial development scattered along the Route 101 corridor. Surroundings with green vegetation and rolling terrain contrasted by open space used for agriculture, grazing, recreation, and drainage basins, create a predominately rural feeling and contribute to the region's scenic beauty. Views of farms, fields, pastures, vineyards, and orchards are noted as important visual assets, and there is strong local concern over the conversion of farmland and open space to other developed uses. Open views of hills, wooded canyons, and distant mountain ranges embracing the Prunedale area are noted as the "community's skyline," providing a picturesque backdrop for the town and natural landmarks for orientation. Exposure of erosive soils by agricultural practices or other development has caused deep erosion scars with a typical "badlands" appearance in some areas. Five Landscape units were identified within the project area: agricultural (Figure 3-5), open space (Figure 3-6), rolling pasture/rural residential, rural residential/watershed, and commercial/suburban residential (Figure 3-7).

Residential neighborhoods traditionally have large-lot, single-family, custom ranch-style homes with scattered sheds and barns. Housing also includes pockets of smaller scale suburban neighborhoods, multi-family residences, a mobile home park, and farm worker complexes. Freestanding rural-delivery mailboxes and rustic wood and wire fences reinforce the rambling country feeling of the area. Strip commercial businesses are scattered along Route 101 and shopping centers are concentrated near the main arterials—Vierra Canyon Road, San Miguel Canyon Road, Prunedale North Road, and Russell/Espinosa Roads.

Figure 3-5 Agricultural View From Route 101

Figure 3-6 Open Space View From Route 101

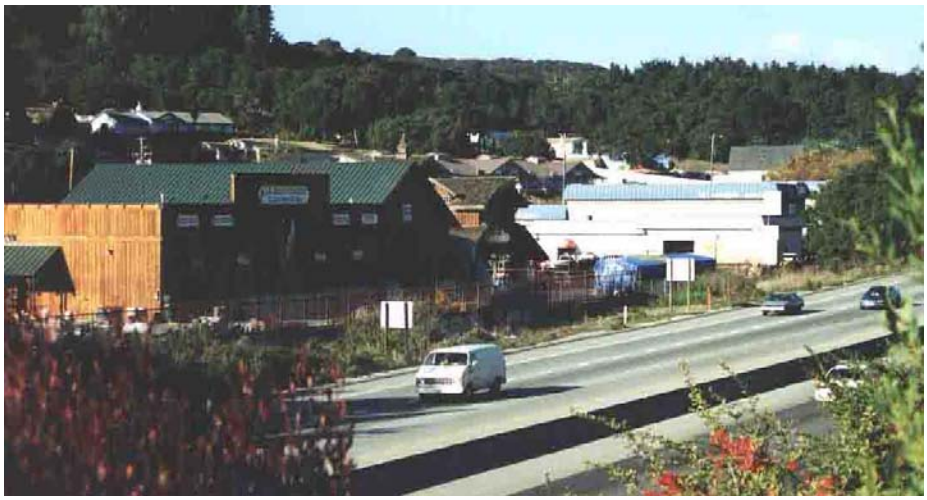

Figure 3-7 Commercial View From Route 101

The paved highway is a major component of the view and is an influential feature in the landscape because of frequent use by a large number and variety of people. The continuity of the natural view from the road is an important part of its visual quality. The dominance of the landscape is highly dependant on the elevation of the viewer, whether they are low in the valley or higher up on the many ridges. Existing concrete median barriers, utility lines and poles, traffic signs and signals, light standards, local roads and driveways, guardrail and fences, and several large advertising billboards detract from the generally rural character of the area.

3.7.3 Impacts

3.7.3.1 Rural Character

This area is characterized by rolling hills, chaparral, and oak woodlands. The proposed interchanges and grade separation structures would be placed in the context of the existing highway facility. While their contrast with the existing conditions would be high, crossovers, ramps, and frontage roads are a common sight along Route 101 and would not be unduly noted by most drivers. The proposed median barrier is an extension of an existing concrete barrier located within the Prunedale area. The barrier is not a new element nor would it block views of the surrounding visual resources that contribute most to the scenic quality of the corridor. Vegetation loss and the introduction of man-made structures could result in an overall loss of rural character.

With the No-Build Alternative, the rural character of the project area would be unaffected.

3.7.3.2 Visual Compatibility

The proposed grade separation interchanges would be visible from multiple locations, angles, and distances (Figures 3-12, 3-21, and 3-24), however the ability of the large-scale natural scene to absorb visual changes within the confines of the existing road is high. Viewer groups unfamiliar with the area would be less sensitive to the changes, as overcrossing structures have become common in the highway landscape and can even function as landmarks. However, the area would also become somewhat less memorable and distinguished for motorists on Route 101, due to this common similarity with other structures located along other stretches of the highway. The quality of the view would decrease for some neighborhood viewers of the highway because of tall vertical elements encroaching on the horizon, however these viewers are generally low in number. New lights near interchanges would be shielded to keep light downcast.

The proposed soundwalls in the Russell/Espinosa and White Road (Figure 3-15) area would result in a noticeable visual change in the area. While undesirable views of the highway would be blocked for people living near the road, positive views of agricultural fields and distant mountains would also be lost for local residents. New retaining walls would also be seen near the San Miguel interchange. Motorists could still view agricultural land to the west, but would be shielded from views of the housing in the vicinity of White Road.

With the No-Build Alternative, the motorist would retain views of the housing in the vicinity of White Road. Without the proposed soundwalls, potentially undesirable views of the roadway would remain visible to people living near the road. The grade-separation interchanges would not be constructed and would, therefore, not obstruct any existing view.

3.7.3.3 Vegetation

The cut slopes proposed at Blackie/Reese and Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley would result in a loss of mature trees and dense vegetation. The loss of vegetation and the addition of associated manmade structures, signs, and utilities, into an area with moderate to low previous encroachments would result in an overall loss of rural character.

Grading for the temporary detour road connecting the existing highway to Crazy Horse Canyon Road during construction would result in an additional loss of mature vegetation and would raise the elevation of the existing terrain. Severe erosion scars adjacent to the existing highway opposite Crazy Horse Canyon Road would be eliminated. Other construction activities and dirt stockpiles would only briefly detract from the visual quality. Potential indirect impacts, such as new erosion and changes in water supply or land management practices, could have minor secondary negative effects on the visual environment.

North of the Route 156/101 interchange, Route 101 is eligible to be designated as a scenic highway. State and county scenic policies require a higher degree of aesthetic consideration during the visual impact assessment process, but do not exclude the construction of transportation features.

There would be no loss of existing vegetation with the No-Build Alternative and the existing scenic qualities of the highway would be unaffected.

Adverse visual impacts of the Build Alternative would be compensated for by the recommended mitigation measures. Once in place, only viewers familiar with Route 101 would perceive that the highway facility had been changed.

Figures 3-8 through 3-10 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed Russell Road Undercrossing.

Figure 3-8 Existing View at Russell Road Looking West

Figure 3-9 Proposed View at Russell Road Looking West (Simulated)

Figure 3-10 Mitigated View at Russell Road Looking West (Simulated)

Figures 3-11 through 3-13 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed new local road interchange approximately 1.0 kilometer (0.62 miles) north of Russell/Espinosa Road.

Figure 3-11 Existing View on Route 101 Looking South Towards New Interchange Located Just North of Russell Road

Figure 3-12 Proposed View on Route 101 Looking South Towards New Interchange Located Just North of Russell Road (Simulated)

Figure 3-13 Mitigated View on Route 101 Looking South Towards New Interchange Located Just North of Russell Road (Simulated)

Figures 3-14 through 3-16 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed soundwall near White Road.

Figure 3-14 Existing View on Route 101 Looking Southeast Near White Road

Figure 3-15 Proposed View on Route 101 Looking Southeast Near White Road (Simulated)

Figure 3-16 Mitigated View on Route 101 Looking Southeast Near White Road (Simulated)

Figures 3-17 through 3-19 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed new Blackie Road/ Reese Circle connection.

Figure 3-17 Existing View on Prunedale Road Looking South Toward Blackie/Reese Circle Connection

Figure 3-18 Proposed View on Prunedale Road Looking South Toward Blackie/Reese Circle Connection (Simulated)

Figure 3-19 Mitigated View on Prunedale Road Looking South Toward Blackie/Reese Circle Connection (Simulated)

Figures 3-20 through 3-22 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed Crazy Horse Canyon Overcrossing.

Figure 3-20 Existing View on Route 101 Looking North Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing

Figure 3-21 Proposed View on Route 101 Looking North Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing (Simulated)

Figure 3-22 Mitigated View on Route 101 Looking North Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing (Simulated)

Figures 3-23 through 3-25 display the existing, proposed, and mitigated view of the proposed Crazy Horse Canyon overcrossing.

Figure 3-23 Existing View on Route 101 Looking South Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing

Figure 3-24 Proposed View on Route 101 Looking South Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing (Simulated)

Figure 3-25 Mitigated View on Route 101 Looking South Toward Crazy Horse Overcrossing (Simulated)

3.7.4 Cumulative Impacts

This project proposes to construct two new interchanges, an undercrossing and overcrossing, concrete median barriers, and local road improvements within an approximately 12.5-kilometer (8-mile) stretch of Route 101. In addition to assessing the visual impacts of each specific improvement location, it is appropriate to examine their collective impact on the visual context of Route 101 through the Prunedale area.

The most noticeable cumulative impact from the proposed project would be the extension of the sequence of grade separation structures, which begins in the City of Salinas, and the general loss of vegetation. Travelers on Route 101 would experience less of a distinction between Prunedale and the more urbanized Salinas area. The removal of mature vegetation and skyline trees would also contribute to a decrease in the rural character of the area, especially when combined with previous losses and the expected sensitivity of local viewers of the roadway and surrounding neighborhoods.

Implementation of the mitigation measures described in Section 3.7.5 (Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation), would help counter the urban effect of the new structures in the project limits, contributing to a comparable level of visual quality or even improved viewing conditions in "gateway" areas. The assessment also indicated that the changes would be perceived as visually neutral for most motorists. Given the result of the analysis, cumulative impacts would not be anticipated.

3.7.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The Visual Quality Assessment indicates that the qualities that make this highway visually enjoyable would outweigh the negative effects of the proposed project. A roadway that is safe, well built, and well maintained strengthens the perception of a visually appealing community.

Based on the Visual Quality Assessment, the following measures would be taken to reduce potential impacts: grading for a natural appearance, minimizing structure profiles, using materials and special treatments that enhance necessary additions to the built environment, and planting trees and landscaping to control erosion and improve aesthetics.

Physical Environment

3.8 Hydrology and Floodplains

This section describes the streams, creeks, and floodplains in the project area, and the potential to affect these resources.

3.8.1 Regulatory Setting

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) directs all federal agencies to refrain from conducting, supporting, or allowing actions in floodplains unless it is the only practicable alternative. The Federal Highway Administration requirements for compliance are outlined in 23 CFR 650 Subpart A. To comply, the following must be analyzed:

- The practicability of alternatives to any longitudinal encroachments
- Risks of the action
- Impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values
- Support of incompatible floodplain development
- Measures to minimize floodplain impacts and to preserve/restore any beneficial floodplain values affected by the project.

The 100-year floodplain is defined as "the area subject to flooding by the flood or tide having a one percent chance of being exceeded in any given year." An encroachment is defined as "an action within the limits of the 100-year floodplain."

3.8.2 Affected Environment

The National Flood Insurance Program 100-year floodplain (considered base flood condition) is defined as a flood event that would be equaled or exceeded an average of once during any 100-year period. Floodways are defined as the channel of a stream, plus any adjacent floodplain area, that must be kept free of encroachment so that 100-year floods can be carried without substantial increases in flood elevations. A Location Hydraulic Study and Floodplain Evaluation (June 4, 2004) was prepared for the project area, and analyzed the potential flood zones and beneficial values of local waterways.

As designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, an area within the project limits is classified as flood "Zone A4." The Location Hydraulic Study and Floodplain Evaluation identified four major streams in the project area: Prunedale

Creek, Gabilan Creek, Santa Rita Creek, and Elkhorn Slough. Prunedale Creek is an alluvial stream, which drains in the southwesterly direction, generally following the existing Route 101 alignment before turning west and draining into Tembladero Slough (Figure 3-26). The major tributaries to Prunedale Creek are San Miguel Canyon Creek, Vierra Canyon Creek, and Pesante Canyon Creek. Within the project limits, three flood zone types occur (Figure 3-26): Zone A, X, and X500. Zone A flood zones correspond to the 100-year floodplain areas shown on Flood Insurance Rate Mapping. Zone X is described as areas of minimal flooding and Zone X500 is classified as a 500-year floodplain.

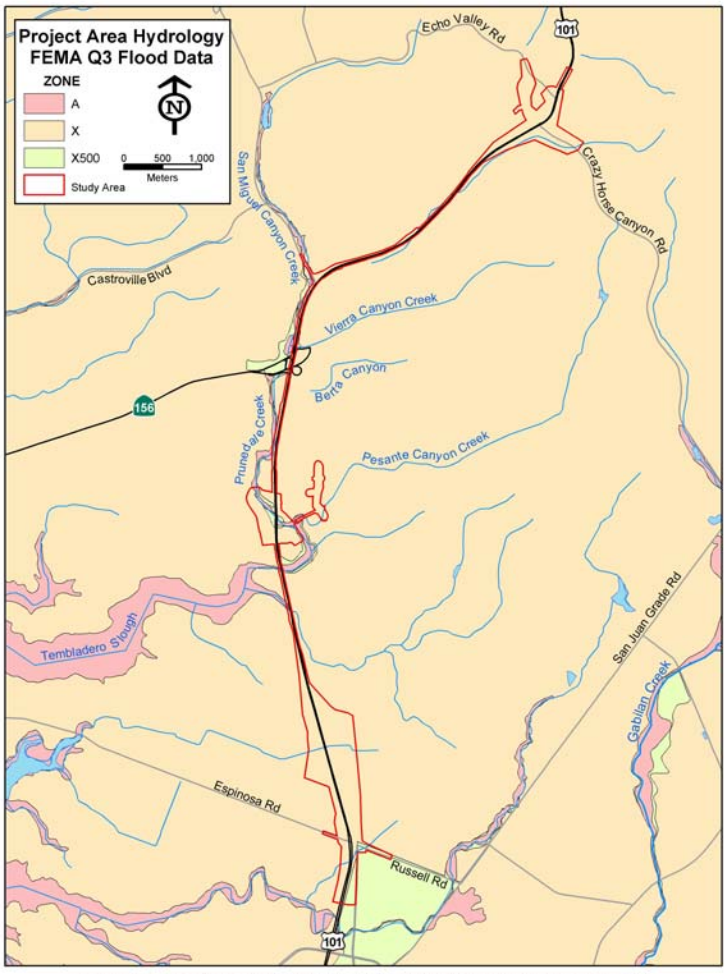

Figure 3-26 Project Area Hydrology

3.8.3 Impacts

Caltrans prepared a Location Hydraulic Study and Floodplain Evaluation, using National Flood Insurance Program maps, for the project area (June 4, 2004). The purpose of this study was to determine how the flow of water would affect the highway, the base floodplain, and the surrounding area. The following project locations would encroach on the floodplain:

- A four-legged intersection with widened pavement for turning movements at Prunedale South Road and Blackie Road. Prunedale Creek travels under the existing three-legged intersection.
- At the Reese Circle and Cross Road intersection, the intersection would be widened for turning movements. Prunedale Creek travels under the intersection.
- The San Miguel Canyon Road interchange improvements include the addition of traffic lanes on San Miguel Canyon Road between the southbound Route 101 off-ramp and North Prunedale Road, and a left-turn lane along the southbound off-ramp. San Miguel Canyon Creek crosses the intersection of San Miguel Canyon Road and Prunedale North Road.
- The improvements for the Crazy Horse interchange would encroach into the Prunedale Creek. This location is not classified as a Federal Emergency Management Agency designated floodplain. The creek would be relocated east, adjacent to the proposed project limits.

The Floodplain Evaluation Report identified the following:

- The project would not have longitudinal encroachments on the base floodplain
- The risks associated with the project are not significant
- The project would not significantly impact the natural and beneficial floodplain values
- The project would not support incompatible floodplain development
- The project would not require special mitigation measures to restore or preserve natural and beneficial floodplain values
- As defined in 23 CFR, Section 650.105(q), the project would not constitute a significant floodplain encroachment

The No-Build Alternative would have no impact on the floodplain.

3.8.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Measures to minimize floodplain impacts and to preserve/restore any beneficial floodplain values affected by the project would include the installation of culverts to allow for the natural flow of storm water.

3.9 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

3.9.1 Regulatory Setting

The primary federal law regulating Water Quality is the Clean Water Act. Section 401 of the Act requires a water quality certification from the State Board or Regional Board when a project: 1) requires a federal license or permit (a Section 404 permit is the most common federal permit for Caltrans projects), and 2) would result in a discharge to waters of the United States.

Section 402 of the Act establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit system for the discharge of any pollutant (except dredge or fill material) into waters of the United States. To ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act Section 402, the State Water Resources Control Board has issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Statewide Storm Water Permit to regulate storm water discharges from Caltrans facilities. The permit regulates storm water discharges from the Caltrans right-of-way both during and after construction, as well as from existing facilities and operations. A Notification of Construction would be submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board prior to construction.

Subject to Caltrans' review and approval, the construction contractor prepares either the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan or the Water Pollution Control Program. The Water Pollution Control Program and the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan identify construction activities that may cause pollutants in storm water and measures to control these pollutants. Since neither the Water Pollution Control Program nor the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan are prepared at this time, the following discussion focuses on anticipated pollution controls.

3.9.2 Affected Environment

Caltrans conducted a Water Quality Assessment (October 21, 2003) for the proposed project. The Water Quality Assessment identifies potential impacts on surface water and groundwater resources resulting from the proposed project and describes project design, procedures, and practices that would minimize potential impacts.

The project area's surface water is located within the Salinas Hydrologic Unit and drains to the Pacific Ocean through Monterey Bay. The project area's ground water is located within the Salinas River Groundwater Basin.

Surface water in the proposed project area generally flows east to west. Precipitation averages about 15 inches per year. Due to the relatively high permeability of sediments underlying the area, a very low percentage of annual rainfall is runoff. Most of the canyons in the proposed project area receive insufficient runoff to maintain active, continuous channels along their lengths.

The major streams in the watershed area are Prunedale Creek on the west and Santa Rita on the southeast. Prunedale Creek is an alluvial stream that drains the hillside in the northern portion of Monterey County, north of Salinas. The Prunedale Creek watershed is bordered by the Elkhorn Slough watershed to the north and west, by the Santa Rita Creek watershed to the southeast, and Gabilan Creek watershed to the east. The major tributaries to Prunedale Creek are San Miguel Canyon Creek, Vierra Canyon Creek, and Pesante Canyon Creek.

Santa Rita Creek is a stream that drains the low-lying agricultural land on the northern edge of Salinas, generally west of San Juan Grade Road. The Santa Rita Creek watershed is bordered by Prunedale Creek to the north, Gabilan Creek to the east, and by the Reclamation Ditch watershed to the south and west. Santa Rita Creek crosses Route 101 south of Russell Road and drains to the Reclamation Ditch south of Espinosa Road. The Reclamation Ditch discharges to Tembladero Slough near Castroville.

3.9.3 Impacts

Pollutants commonly associated with highways are litter, heavy metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, brake materials, oil and grease, sediment, suspended solids, and pesticides and herbicides. Potential impacts to water quality are associated with the discharge of pollutants in storm water runoff from the highway.

The project would not place any demands on existing water supplies, including groundwater, or substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area. It would not violate water quality standards, or create water runoff that would exceed the capacity of the receiving waters or storm water drainage channels, or substantially degrade water quality.

Water quality would not be impacted by the No-Build Alternative.

3.9.3.1 Temporary Impacts

Construction activities can impair water quality temporarily because disturbed and eroded soil, petroleum products, and miscellaneous wastes may be discharged into receiving waters. Sediment and associated contaminants that enter stream channels can increase turbidity (cloudiness), stimulate growth of algae, increase sedimentation of aquatic habitat, and introduce compounds that are potentially harmful to aquatic organisms. Construction materials such as fuels, oils, paints, and concrete are potentially harmful to fish and other aquatic life if released into the environment. The extent of the potential environmental effects depends on:

- The soil types encountered and how easily they erode
- The type of construction activities
- The extent and duration the area is disturbed
- The timing of precipitation
- The proximity to drainage channels
- The implementation of Best Management Practices

3.9.3.2 Permanent Impacts

No long-term impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the project.

3.9.4 Cumulative Impacts

By incorporating the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices during construction and a Storm Water Management Plan after construction, no cumulative impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

3.9.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Potential temporary impacts to water quality during construction would be addressed in both the design and construction phases. In the design phase, plans would be made to ensure that there would be no detrimental discharge into any bodies of water. To minimize or eliminate potential impacts to the maximum extent practicable, Caltrans would determine the feasibility of incorporating the following design pollution prevention Best Management Practices into the project:

- Preservation of Existing Vegetation
- Concentrated Flow Conveyance Systems
- Slope Surface Protection Systems

To address the potential impacts to water quality during the construction phase, Caltrans would require the contractor to prepare and implement a program to control water pollution effectively during construction. Before the commencement of any ground-disturbing activities, the contractor would be required to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that satisfies the requirements of Caltrans' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit, the General Construction Permit, and Caltrans' *Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan/Water Pollution Control Plan Preparation Guide*, (March 2003).

Construction scheduling and staging would consider the amount and duration of soil exposed by wind, rainfall, runoff, and vehicle tracking and would seek to minimize the disturbed soil area during the rainy season. A schedule would be prepared by the contractor and incorporated into the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that shows the sequencing of construction activities with the installation of erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has identified the rainy season within the project area to be from October 15 to April 15. The contractor would amend the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan as stage construction, site conditions, and weather conditions dictate.

Caltrans has a statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit/Section 401 Certification for Water Discharge requirements, which is always in effect. Coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Board would ensure that water quality is not compromised by the discharge of any pollutants into bodies of water during construction. The permits require the following:

- A Notice of Construction is to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days before the start of construction. The tentative start date, tentative duration, location of construction, description of the project, an estimate of the number of affected areas, name of the resident engineer in charge of the project, and the telephone number of the resident engineer would be reported.
- A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the resident engineer.
- As the proposed project is located within a designated urban area, Best Management Practices would be evaluated and incorporated as determined feasible by the project engineer.
- A Notice of Completion would be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board upon completion of construction and stabilization of the site. A

project would be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.

- With adequate measures and precautions, the project would not adversely affect the water quality in the project area.

3.10 Hazardous Waste/Materials

A hazardous waste/material includes any substance with the potential to cause a negative affect to the surrounding environment.

3.10.1 Regulatory Setting

Hazardous materials and hazardous wastes are regulated by many state and federal laws. These include not only specific statutes governing hazardous waste, but also a variety of laws regulating air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The primary federal laws regulating hazardous wastes/materials are the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. The purpose of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, often referred to as Superfund, is to clean up contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provides for "cradle to grave" regulation of hazardous wastes. Other federal laws include:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act of 1992
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Occupational Safety & Health Act (OSHA)
- Atomic Energy Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act

In addition to the acts listed above, Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved.

Hazardous waste in California is regulated primarily under the authority of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and the California Health and Safety Code. Other California laws that affect hazardous waste are specific to

handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning.

Worker health and safety and public safety are key issues when dealing with hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is disturbed during project construction.

3.10.2 Affected Environment

A Preliminary Site Investigation and Initial Site Assessment were conducted for the project (October 2, 2003). Within the project limits, nine properties identified as potentially containing hazardous waste/materials were evaluated. The identified waste/materials included several underground storage tanks, an auto body paint shop, an oil spill, and a waste oil and ethylene glycol storage facility. The following maps indicate the locations of the nine properties (shown from south to north).

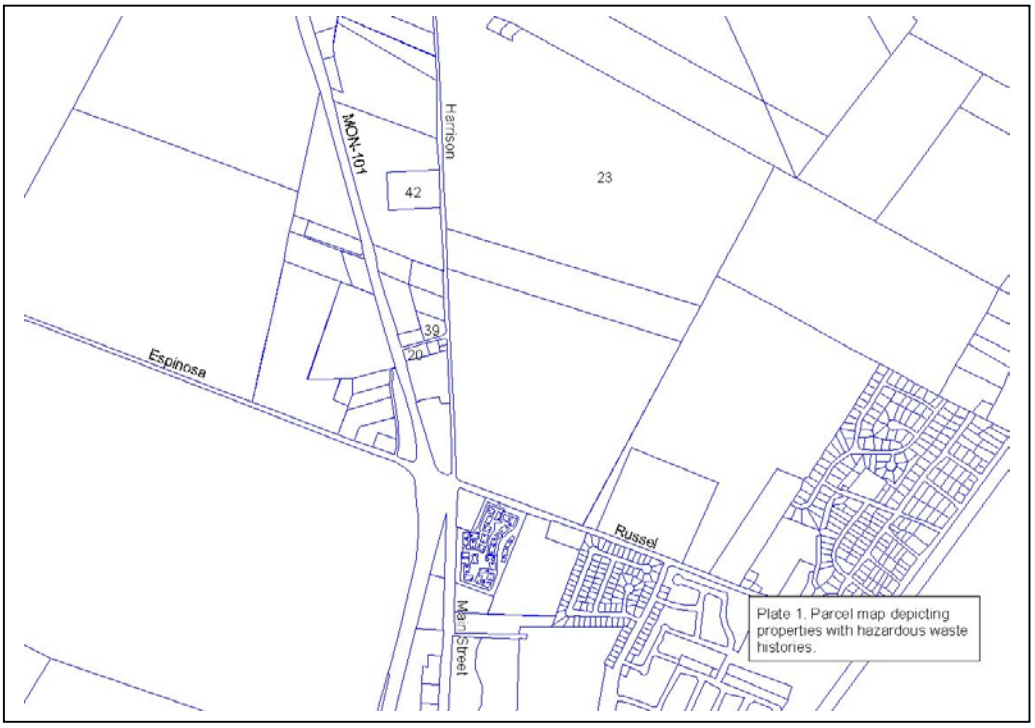

Figure 3-27a Potential Hazardous Waste Sites

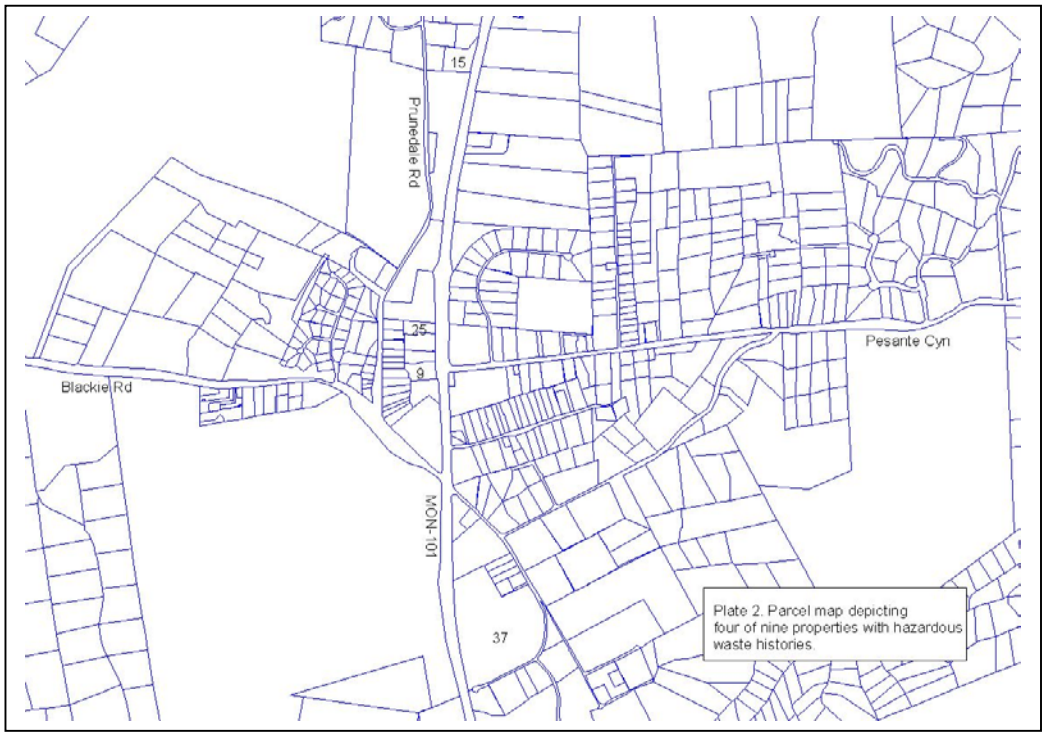

Figure 3-27b Potential Hazardous Waste Sites

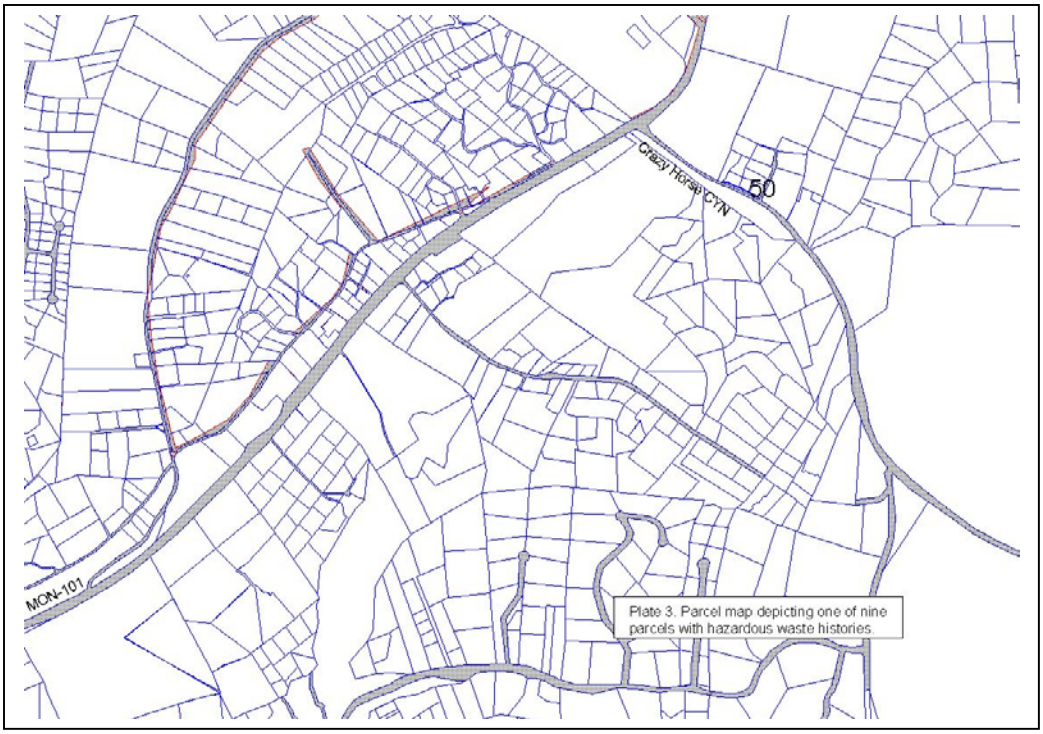

Figure 3-27c Potential Hazardous Waste Sites

Table 3.6 Potential Hazardous Waste Risk Assessment

Map ID #	Proposed for Acquisition	Concern	Risk Status
09	No	Former gas station	No risk, Monterey County Department of Environmental Health closed case
15	No	Facilities with historical usage of hazardous materials	No risk, no project activity would occur on the project
25	No	Potential spills of hazardous solvents, hydrocarbon oil and grease or paint	Low risk, no indication of leaking storage containers
39	No	Underground storage tanks properly removed	Low risk, storage tanks were properly removed. There is no indication of past leakage
42	No	Potential spills of hydrocarbon oil or grease and pesticides	Low risk, inspections do not indicate the presence of spills or leaks
50	Yes	Potential spills of hydrocarbon oil or grease and pesticides	Low risk, inspections do not indicate the presence of spills or leaks
20	Yes	Potential spills of hazardous chemicals	Low risk, stringent guidelines enforced and there is no indication of past or current spills or leaking storage containers
23	Yes	Potential spills of hydrocarbon oil or grease and pesticides	Low risk, there is no indication of past or current spills or leaking storage containers
37	Yes	Potential spills of hydrocarbon oil or grease and pesticides	Low risk, there is no indication of past or current spills or leaking storage containers

All nine sites identified on the preceding maps are within the Prunedale Improvement Project study area. The project would require acquisition of four of the nine parcels identified (see Table 3.6). It is unlikely any hazardous waste would be encountered on these four parcels (see "Risk Status" column in table). Project work would not occur near enough to the other five parcels, which would not be acquired, to be affected by potential hazardous waste/materials.

3.10.3 Impacts

The project was designed to avoid potential hazardous waste/materials sites.

The No-Build Alternative would not affect any potential hazardous waste/material sites.

3.10.4 Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

Remediation measures would not be anticipated.

3.11 Air Quality

Air quality varies from region to region and is evaluated based on foreign matter in the air.

3.11.1 Regulatory Setting

The Clean Air Act as amended in 1990 is the federal law that governs air quality. Its counterpart in California is the California Clean Air Act of 1988. These laws set standards for the quantity of pollutants that can be in the air. At the federal level, these standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Standards have been established for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), and particulate matter that is 10 microns in diameter or smaller (PM_{10}).

Under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, the U.S. Department of Transportation cannot fund, authorize, or approve Federal actions to support programs or projects that are not first found to conform to the Clean Air Act requirements. Conformity with the Clean Air Act takes place on two levels—first, at the regional level and second, at the project level. The proposed project must conform at both levels to be approved.

Regional level conformity is concerned with how well the region is meeting the standards set for the pollutants listed above. At the regional level, Regional Transportation Plans are developed that include all of the transportation projects planned for a region over a period of years, usually 20. Based on the projects included in the Regional Transportation Plan, an air quality model is run to determine whether or not the implementation of those projects would result in a violation of the Clean Air Act. If no violations would occur, then the regional planning organization, such as the Transportation Agency For Monterey County and the appropriate federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, make the determination that the Regional Transportation Plan is in conformity with the Clean Air Act. Otherwise, the projects in the Regional Transportation Plan must be modified until conformity is attained. If the design and scope of the proposed transportation project are the same as described in the Regional Transportation Plan, then the proposed project is deemed to be in conformity at the regional level.

Conformity at the project-level is also required. Again the pollutants of concern are: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), and particulate matter that is 10 microns in diameter or smaller (PM_{10}). If a region is meeting the standard for a given pollutant, then the region is said to be in “attainment” for that pollutant. If the

region is not meeting the standard, then it is designated a "non-attainment" area for that pollutant. Areas that were previously designated as non-attainment areas but have recently met the standard are called "maintenance" areas. If a project is located in a non-attainment or maintenance area for a given pollutant, then additional air quality analysis and reduction measures for that pollutant is required. This is most frequently done for Carbon Monoxide and PM_{10}.

3.11.1.1 Regional Air Quality Conformity

The 2005 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan is planned to be conforming by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County in May 2005, and the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration are expected to adopt the air quality conformity finding in May 2005. The project will also be included in the Transportation Agency for Monterey County financially constrained 2005 Regional Transportation Improvement Program. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2005 Regional Transportation Improvement Program is planned to be conforming by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration in May 2005. The design concept and scope of the proposed project is consistent with the project description in the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan, the 2005 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, and the assumptions in the Regional Transportation Planning Agency's regional emissions analysis.

Given this project is a subset of the Prunedale Freeway Project, and the freeway project is in the current 2002 Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program, this project complies with current and proposed future plans.

3.11.2 Affected Environment

The project is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin, which is comprised of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties. The basin lies along the central coast of California covering an area of 5,159 square miles, and is bordered by the Santa Cruz Mountains to the northwest, the Diablo Mountain Range to the northeast, the Gabilan Mountain Range to the east, and the Santa Lucia Mountain Range to the west.

The semi-permanent high-pressure cell in the eastern Pacific is the basic controlling factor of the climate in the air basin. In summer, the cell is dominant and causes persistent west and northwest winds over the entire California coast. Air descends in the Pacific forming a stable temperature inversion of hot air over a cool coastal layer

of air. The onshore air currents pass over cool ocean waters to bring fog and relatively cool air into the coastal valleys. The warmer air aloft acts as a lid to inhibit vertical air movement. In the fall, the Pacific high pressure cell moves south causing surface wind speeds to lesson, with the marine layer becoming shallow, dissipating altogether on some days. Air quality is generally good in the basin during the summer and fall. The dominant inversion layer during these seasons can lead to a build-up of air pollutants over a few days, but the persistent strong onshore winds usually blow air pollutants away in a short timeframe.

During the winter, the Pacific high-pressure cell moves even further south and has even a less influence on the air basin. Northwest winds are still dominant in the winter, but air frequently flows offshore, especially during night and morning hours. The general absence of persistent inversion layers and the occasional storm systems result in good air quality for the basin as a whole in winter and spring.

Caltrans prepared an Air Quality Analysis Report (April 22, 2004) to determine air quality in the project area and to identify specific relevant pollutants. Attainment means that a region is in compliance with established limits for emissions. Non-attainment refers to emissions that exceed established thresholds.

The proposed project is located in Monterey County in the North Central Coast Air Basin. Table 3.7 indicates Monterey County's attainment status under federal and state air quality standards.

Table 3.7 Air Quality

Criteria Pollutant	Federal Standard (National Ambient Air Quality Standards)	Federal Attainment Status	State Standard	State Attainment Status
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	35 ppm (1-hour average) 9 ppm (8-hour average)	Unclassified	20 ppm (1-hour average) 9 ppm (8-hour average)	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	.053 ppm (1-hour annual average)	Unclassified	0.25 ppm (1-hour annual average)	Attainment
Ozone (O_3)	0.12 ppm (1-hour average)	Maintenance	0.09 ppm (1-hour average)	Non-Attainment
Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	150 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual arithmetic mean)	Unclassified	50 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual arithmetic mean)	Non-Attainment

Source: Air Quality Analysis Report, April 2004
PPM = parts per million

3.11.3 Impacts

The proposed project is included in the Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (approval expected May 2005) and the Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (approval expected May 2005) and is thereby in conformity with current national ambient air quality standards and California ambient air quality standards of 1990. The design concept and scope of the project are consistent with that assumed in the regional emission analysis. For a transportation project to be listed in the regional transportation plan, it must conform to the state plan for attaining national ambient air quality standards. The project has met these requirements and is compliant with the State Implementation Plan for regional pollutants (ozone and particulate matter), as provided in the 1997 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Transportation Conformity Rule and Rule 9120 (Transportation Conformity).

Implementation of the proposed project would not worsen any existing violation or create any new localized violations of particulate matter or carbon monoxide standards.

With the No-Build Alternative, multiple direct access points would remain. Vehicles would continue to idle waiting to turn on to or off Route 101. Potentially negative effects on air quality could result.

3.11.3.1 Construction Phase Impacts

During construction, the proposed project would generate temporary air pollutants. The exhaust from construction equipment contains hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, suspended particulate matter, and odor. However, the largest percentage of pollutants would be windblown dust generated during excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities. The impact of these activities would vary each day as construction progresses. The impacts of these activities close to the right-of-way could cause occasional annoyance and complaints.

The No-Build Alternative would not generate temporary air pollutants from construction.

3.11.4 Cumulative Impacts

An evaluation of the project and project area has determined that this project would not substantially contribute to regional-scale air pollutants, and would have no major adverse impacts on exterior carbon monoxide levels.

3.11.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and / or Mitigation Measures

To minimize construction-related impacts to air quality, the contractor would be required to comply with all local air quality regulations and ordinances. Dust would be controlled by standard construction practices such as spraying disturbed areas with water, limiting work on windy days, and using erosion control measures during and after construction. The project would also be subject to Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District regulations to control dust emissions from human activities. Regulation provisions require that daily watering be implemented. When daily watering is insufficient to minimize particulate emissions, the Resident Engineer, at their discretion, would require the contractor to use appropriate measures:

- Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 24.1 kilometers per hour [15 miles per hour]).
- Apply non-toxic binders to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydro-seed area.
- Haul trucks would maintain at least 0.6 meters (2.0 feet) of freeboard.
- Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials.
- Plant vegetative cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible.
- Cover inactive storage piles.
- Sweep streets if visible soil is carried out of the construction site.
- Limit the area of construction at any one time.

3.12 Noise

Caltrans evaluated the project's potential to create noise impacts and to determine if noise abatement measures are reasonable and feasible.

3.12.1 Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the California Environmental Quality Act provide the broad basis for analyzing and abating the effects of highway traffic noise. The intent of these laws is to promote the general welfare and to foster a healthy environment.

For highway transportation projects with Federal Highway Administration involvement, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 and the associated implementing regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations 772) govern the analysis and abatement of traffic noise impacts. The regulations require that potential noise impacts in areas

of frequent human use be identified during the planning and design of a highway project. The regulations contain noise abatement criteria that are used to determine when a noise impact would occur. The noise abatement criteria differ depending on the type of land use under analysis. For example, the criterion for residences (67 decibels) is lower than the criterion for commercial areas (72 decibels). Table 3.8 below indicates the noise abatement criteria and Figure 3-28 compares noise levels to common activities.

In accordance with Caltrans' *Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction and Reconstruction Projects, October 1998*, a noise impact occurs when the future noise level with the project results in a substantial increase in noise level (defined as a 12-decibel or more increase) or when the future noise level with the project approaches or exceeds the noise abatement criteria. Approaching the noise abatement criteria is defined as coming within 1 decibel of the criteria.

If it is determined that the project would have noise impacts, then potential abatement measures must be considered. Noise abatement measures that are determined to be reasonable and feasible at the time of final design are incorporated into the project plans and specifications. This document discusses noise abatement measures that would likely be incorporated in the project.

Caltrans' *Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol* sets forth the criteria for determining when an abatement measure is reasonable and feasible. Feasibility of noise abatement is basically an engineering concern. A minimum 5-decibel reduction in the future noise level must be achieved for an abatement measure to be considered feasible. Other considerations include topography, access requirements, other noise sources, and safety considerations. The reasonableness determination is basically a cost-benefit analysis. Factors used in determining whether a proposed noise abatement measure is reasonable include: residents' acceptance, the absolute noise level, build versus existing noise, environmental impacts of abatement, public and local agencies input, newly constructed development versus development pre-dating 1978, and the cost per benefited residence. A Type I project is one that is federally funded, and proposes to construct a highway on a new location, or physically alter an existing highway in a way that significantly changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment, or increases the number of through lanes.

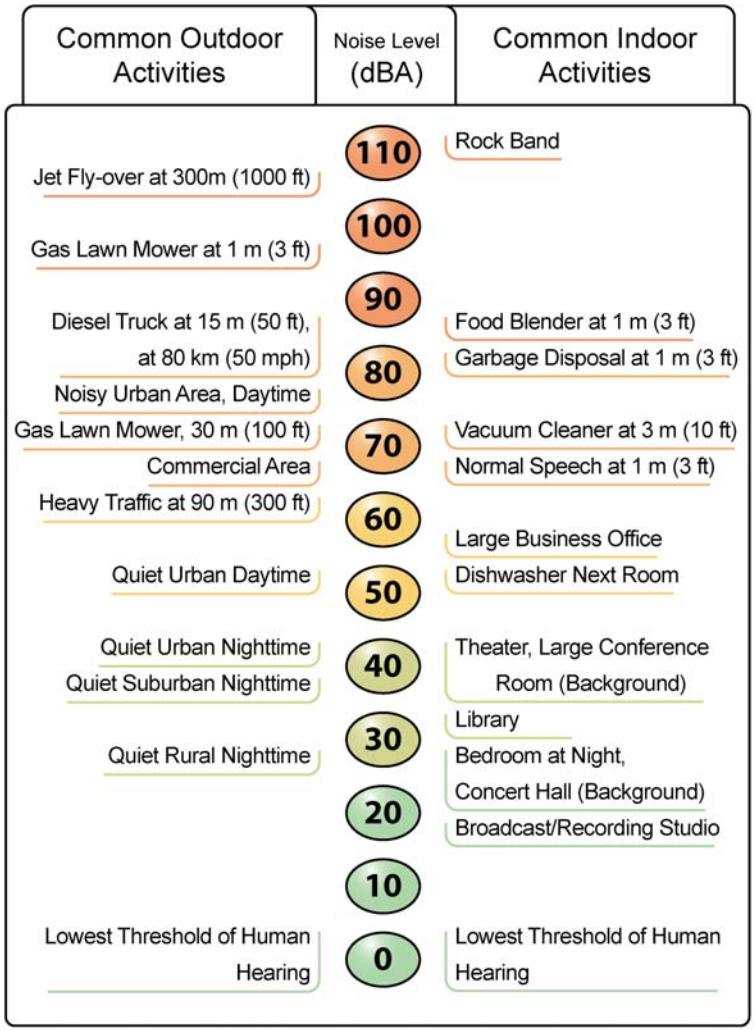

Figure 3-28 Noise Level Equivalents

Table 3.8 Activity Categories and Noise Abatement Criteria

Activity Category	Noise Abatement Criteria, A-weighted Noise Level, Average Decibels Over One Hour	Description of Activity Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B	67 (Exterior)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (Exterior)	Developed lands, activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	--	Undeveloped lands.
E	52 (Interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

Source: Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Manual, 1998
A-weighted decibels are adjusted to approximate the way humans perceive sound

3.12.2 Affected Environment

Caltrans prepared a Noise Technical Report (Updated May 2005) to determine the project's potential to have noise impacts on the surrounding environment. The project is located in a rural area, surrounded by farmland at the southern portion and rolling hills at the central and northern portions. Businesses and residences are located adjacent to Route 101 intermittently throughout the project area. The Noise Technical Report indicated that existing noise levels in the project area range from 62 to 79 decibels. Table 3.9 indicates that existing conditions at 10 of the 14 receptor locations (1-6a, 6c, 9-12) meet or exceed the Noise Abatement Criterion of 67 decibels.

3.12.3 Impacts

A Traffic Noise Analysis was conducted for 14 receptors, which represent numerous residences in each of the areas affected by the project (Figures 3-29, 3-30, and 3-31). Predictions for existing and future traffic noise levels on these receptors were made by using the LeqV2 San Francisco Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model and Caltrans Sound 2000 software, which is compatible to the Federal Highway Administration's traffic noise prediction model. Twelve of the 14 receptors studied would approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criterion of 67 decibels for residences and schools in the design year 2030 (Table 3.9). Therefore, noise abatement measures must be considered for these receptors.

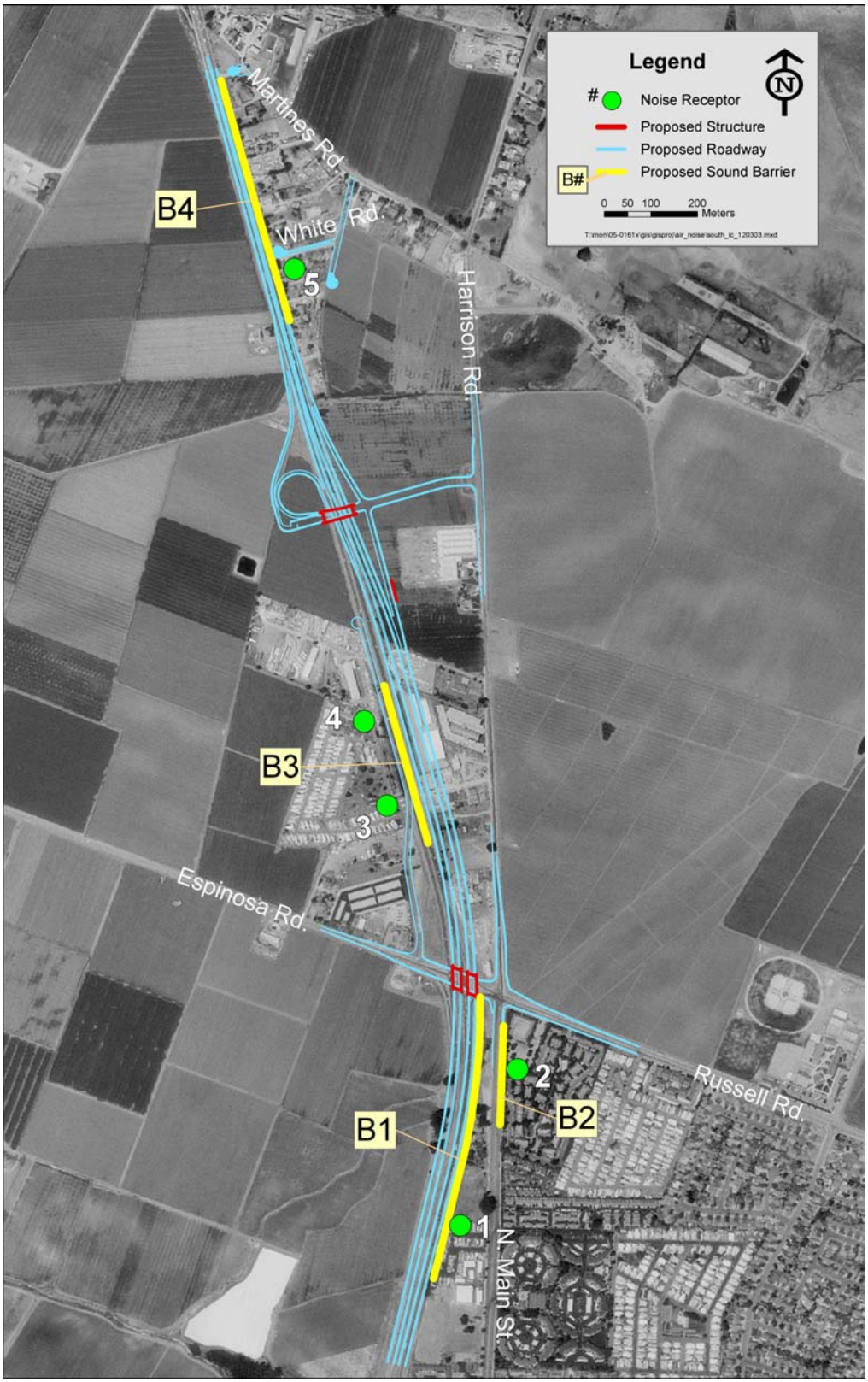

Figure 3-29 Sound Barriers Considered for Noise Receptors 1 through 5

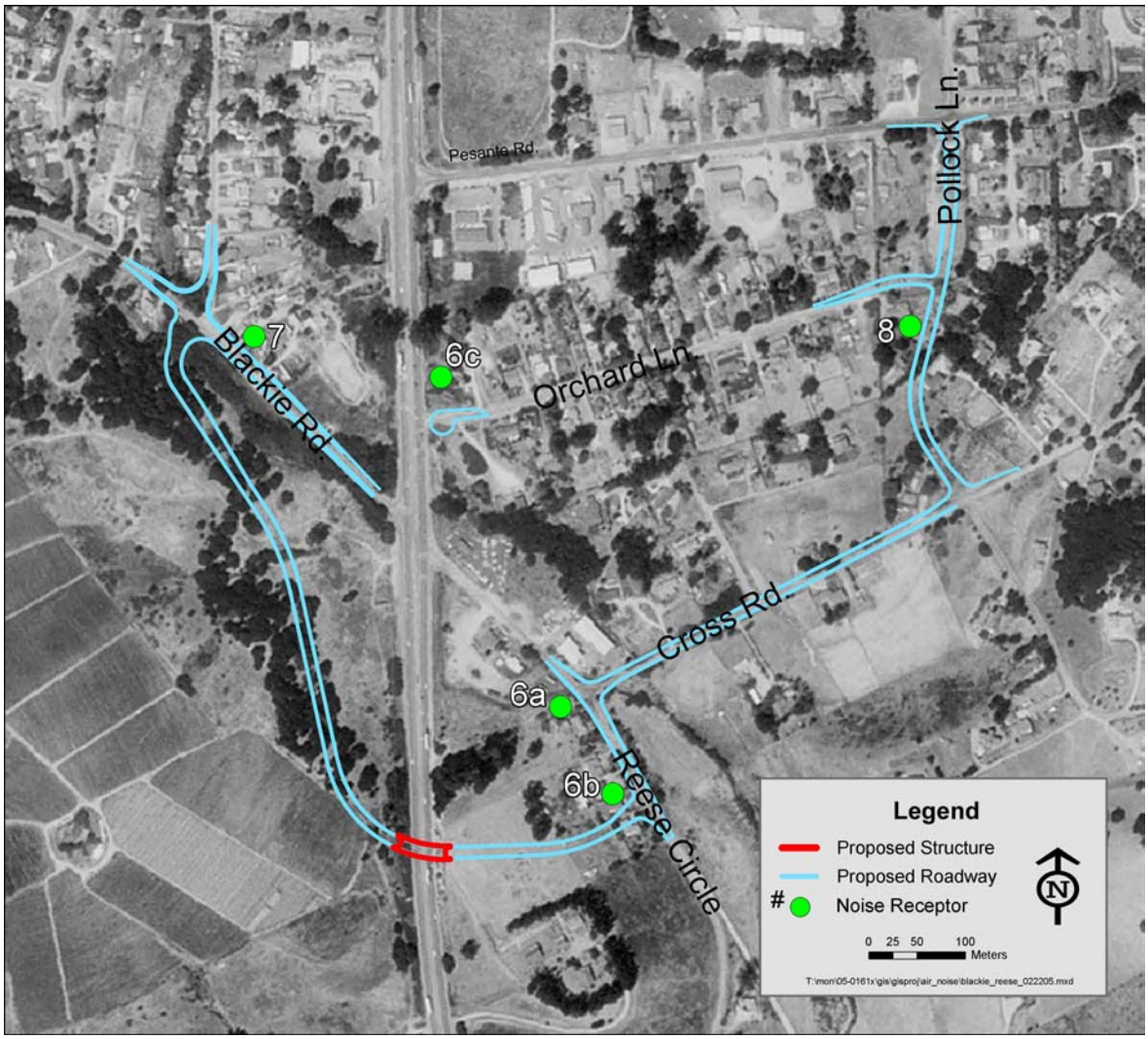

Figure 3-30 Noise Receptors 6 through 8

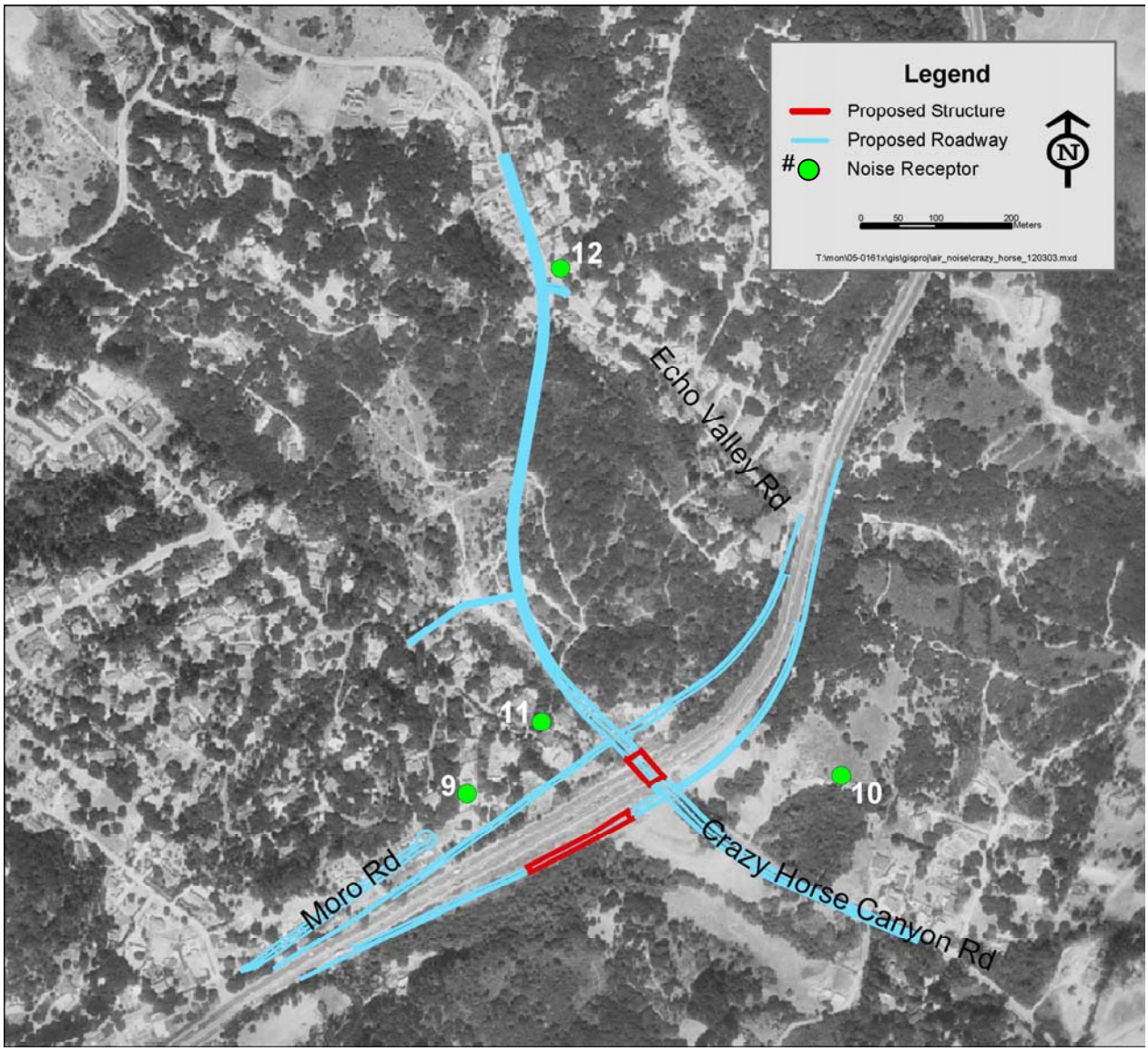

Figure 3-31 Noise Receptors 9 through 12

Table 3.9 Noise Impacts

Receptor # (For Locations See Figures 3.29, 3.30, and 3.31)	Existing Noise Level	Predicted Noise Level without Project (dBA)	Predicted Noise Level with Project (dBA))	Predicted Noise Level with Abatement (dBA)				Feasible
				10'	12'	14'	16'	
1	79	80	80	69	67*	66	65	Yes
2	69	70	71	Noise barrier not reasonable				
3	70	71	71	65*	64	62	61	Yes
4	70	71	71	65*	64	62	61	Yes
5	78	79	79	72	70	68*	67	Yes
6a	67	69	70	Noise barriers at these locations not warranted or reasonable/feasible				
6b	65	67	68					
6c	78	80	80					
7	66	68	69					
8	63	64	64					
9	70	72	62					
10	68	70	66					
11	72	74	60					
12	62	64	64					

Note: The year used for Existing Noise Level was 2000. Predicted Noise Level year is 2030. Noise Levels represent predicted peak hour levels.
dBA = decibels on the A weighted scale (weighted for the human ear's response to sound).
* Indicates recommended barrier height.
Source: 5/4/05 Noise Technical Report

The following discusses the potential impacts on the receptors in the project area:

1. Receptor 1 represents 16 homes located south of Russell Road between N. Main Street and Route 101 (Figure 3-29). Measurements of peak hour traffic noise levels were taken at Receptor 1 and indicate that the existing noise level at this location is 79 decibels. Predictions for future traffic noise levels are based on future predicted traffic volumes and distances from sensitive receptors. The year 2030 noise level at this location, with the project constructed, is predicted to be 80 decibels. Because the future noise level exceeds the noise abatement criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), the 16 homes represented by Receptor 1 would be adversely affected by noise.
2. Receptor 2 represents condominiums east of Main Street (Figure 3-29). Measurements of peak hour traffic noise levels were taken at Receptor 2 and indicate that the exiting noise level at this location is 69 decibels. Noise modeling indicates that the 2030 noise levels at Receptor 2 would be 70 decibels from the Route 101 freeway and 64 decibels from Main Street, which equates to a combined 71 decibels. Because the future noise level exceeds the noise abatement

criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), the condominiums represented by Receptor 2 would be adversely affected by noise.

3. Receptors 3 and 4 represent 12 homes located adjacent to Route 101, on the west side of the highway and just north of Espinosa Road (Figure 3-29). Measurements of peak hour traffic noise levels were taken at Receptors 3 and 4. The readings indicate that the existing noise level at these locations is 70 decibels. Predictions for future traffic noise levels are based on future predicted traffic volumes and distances from sensitive receptors. The future (year 2030) noise level at these locations, with the project constructed, is predicted to be 71 decibels. Because the future noise level exceeds the noise abatement criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), the 12 homes represented by Receptors 3 and 4 would be adversely affected by noise.
4. Receptor 5 represents 18 homes located adjacent to Route 101 and White Road (Figure 3-29). Measurements for traffic noise levels taken at Receptor 5 indicate that the existing peak hour noise level at this location is 78 decibels. Predictions for future traffic noise levels are based on future predicted traffic volumes and distances from sensitive receptors. The future (year 2030) noise level at this location, with the project constructed, is predicted to be 79 decibels. Because the future noise level exceeds the noise abatement criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), the 18 homes represented by Receptor 5 would be adversely affected by noise.
5. Receptors 6a and 6b represent residences west of Reese Circle and east of Route 101 near the new connection on Reese Circle (Figure 3-30). Year 2030 predicted traffic noise would take Receptor 6a from an existing 67-decibel level to 69 decibels without the project. Receptor 6b is predicted to increase from an existing noise level of 65 decibels to 67 decibels in 2030 under the same condition. Because future noise levels for Receptor 6a meet or exceed the noise abatement criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), those homes would be adversely affected by noise.
6. Receptor 6c is located on the east side of Route 101 near Orchard Lane (Figure 3-30). At 78 decibels, noise levels at this receptor are currently above the noise abatement criteria and are predicted to increase another 2 decibels by 2030. Although no highway construction is proposed adjacent to Receptor 6c, this receptor is adjacent to Orchard Lane which is a proposed cul-de-sac. While there will be less local traffic in the vicinity of this receptor, the highway remains the dominant noise source in the area and noise levels will not be affected by the proposed project.

7. Receptor 7 represents homes along Blackie Road over 200 feet west of Route 101 (Figure 3-30). Existing noise levels of 66 decibels are predicted to increase to 68 decibels by 2030 without the project. Because the future noise level exceeds the noise abatement criterion for residential uses (67 decibels), the homes represented by Receptor 7 would be adversely affected by noise.
8. Receptor 8 currently experiences a peak noise level of 63 decibels, which is below the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels. Homes in the area of Receptor 8 (Figure 3-30) would not be adversely affected by noise as the predicted increase in 2030 to 64 decibels remains below the noise abatement criterion.
9. Receptors 9 and 11 represent homes west of Route 101 and south of the new Echo Valley Road connection to Crazy Horse Canyon Road (Figure 3-31). Existing noise levels at these locations exceed the 67-decibel noise abatement criterion for residential uses (70 and 72 decibels respectively) and each would increase 2 decibels by 2030 without the project. With the project, however, the newly proposed southbound on- and off-ramps would act as a berm for Receptors 9 and 11, reducing the peak noise levels to below the noise abatement criteria, therefore not being adversely affected by noise.
10. Receptor 10 represents homes in the area north of Crazy Horse Canyon Road and over 200 feet east of Route 101 (Figure 3-31). Existing noise levels in this area are at 68 decibels and would increase to 70 decibels without the project. But much like with Receptors 9 and 11, the proposed improvements would reduce ambient noise levels because the proposed ramps should act as noise barriers. With the project, the noise levels would be reduced to 66 decibels, which approaches the noise abatement criterion of 67 for homes.
11. Receptor 12 represents homes on existing Echo Valley Road west of Route 101 near where the new connection to Crazy Horse Canyon Road would break away (Figure 3-31). Both existing (62 decibels) and predicted future noise levels with or without the project (64 decibels) would be below the noise abatement criterion.

Construction noise has the potential to cause additional noise impacts to residences in the vicinity of the proposed improvements. Normal construction activity can generate noise levels up to 90 decibels at 15.2 meters (50 feet) from the equipment. Extraordinary construction activity like pavement breaking and pile driving can cause peak noise levels up to 110 decibels. Caltrans policy on “normal” construction activity is that it should not emit more than 86 decibels at 15.2 meters (50 feet) from the source. Since noise from a “point source” like construction equipment drops off at a rate of 6 to 7.5 decibels per distance doubled, residences within 183 meters (600

feet) of the source can experience noise impacts (above 67 decibels) from construction activities.

Noise levels with the No-Build Alternative, at all receptors, would be about 2 decibels louder than existing levels in the project design year (2030) due to predicted traffic increases on Route 101. There would be no temporary noise due to construction associated with the No-Build Alternative.

3.12.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Abatement Measures

The following discusses all receptors and proposed barriers where appropriate:

1. Receptor 1. Based on the studies completed to date, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration intend to incorporate noise abatement in the form of a noise barrier (B1, Figure 3-29) on the east side of Route 101 starting at Russell Road. The barrier would be 1,902 feet long and 12 feet high, but as the barrier gains elevation past the homes west of North Main Street, the barrier height could be gradually reduced to 10 feet to minimize visual impacts near the Russell/Espinosa Overcrossing. Calculations based on preliminary design data indicate that the barrier would reduce noise levels by up to 13 decibels for 16 residences. The current estimated cost of the barrier at this location is $247,500. The total reasonable cost allowance is $736,000, therefore the barrier will likely be incorporated into the project.
2. Receptor 2. As the condominiums represented by Receptor 2 would be adversely affected by noise, constructing a noise barrier was considered. It would be necessary to create several driveway access points through any barrier in that location, however, making the barrier infeasible. Even without breaks, a barrier at this location would only provide protection from noise generated on Main Street, not that generated from the realigned Route 101 that would be 15 to 24 feet above Main Street. Better protection for the condominiums would be provided by extending B1 to Russell Road. Therefore, no barrier is proposed at this location.
3. Receptors 3 and 4. Based on the studies completed to date, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration intend to incorporate noise abatement in the form of a noise barrier (B3, Figure 3-29) located on the west side of Route 101, north of Espinosa Road. The barrier would be 1,245 feet long and 10 feet high. Calculations based on preliminary design data indicate that the barrier would reduce noise levels about 6 decibels for 12 residences. The current estimated cost of the barrier at this location is $187,500. The reasonable cost allowance is $528,500, therefore the barrier will likely be incorporated into the project.

4. Receptor 5. Based on the studies completed to date, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration intend to incorporate noise abatement in the form of a noise barrier (B4, Figure 3-29) located on the east side of Route 101 north and south of White Road. The barrier would be 1,745 feet long and an average of 14 feet high. Calculations based on preliminary design data indicate that the barrier would reduce noise levels about 11 decibels for 18 residences. The estimated cost of the barrier at this location is $482,000. The reasonable cost allowance is $864,000, therefore the barrier will likely be incorporated into the project.
5. Receptors 6a and 6b. A noise barrier at this location was considered. Because of the need to create several driveway access points through the barrier making it infeasible, a noise barrier is not proposed.
6. Receptor 6c. No barrier is proposed at this location. Existing noise levels of 78 decibels are above the noise abatement criterion for residential uses, but the project would not contribute to future noise levels predicted to be 80 decibels.
7. Receptors 7 and 10. No barriers are proposed to protect residences in these locations since the distance from Route 101 would render infeasible any barrier constructed within the state right-of-way.
8. Receptors 8 and 12. No barrier is proposed to protect residences in these locations because the predicted noise level in 2030 is below the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels.
9. Receptors 9 and 11. No barriers are proposed to protect residences in these locations, as the project's proposed southbound on- and off-ramps would reduce the peak noise levels to below the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels.

If, during final design, the conditions above have substantially changed, the abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision on the installation of abatement measures would be made upon completion of the project design and the public involvement processes.

Night construction is expected with the proposed project. The following actions are recommended to minimize noise impacts from construction activity:

- Notices would be published in local news media of the dates and duration of the proposed construction activities. A telephone number for the Resident Engineer's office would be included.
- When possible, noisier construction activities would be scheduled during the earlier parts of the evening or afternoon.

- Temporary sound barriers can be constructed where construction activities would be conducted near residents or where complaints have been received.
- When early construction of sound barriers would not interfere with construction activities, the proposed sound barriers would be constructed ahead of other project activities.
- When construction noise levels of 75 decibels or more are reached, or would be experienced by residents for more than two nights, the resident engineer would consider providing motel accommodations for the affected residents.

Biological Environment

The biological environment for a proposed project includes plant and animal species, habitat types, and wetlands. Figure 3-32 shows the community types and biological environment study area for the project.

3.13 Natural Communities

3.13.1 Regulatory Setting

This section of the document discusses natural communities of concern. The focus of this section is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species. This section also includes information on wildlife corridors and habitat fragmentation. Wildlife corridors are areas of habitat used by wildlife for seasonal or daily migration. Habitat fragmentation involves the potential for dividing sensitive habitat and thereby lessening its biological value.

Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 3.17. Wetlands and other waters are discussed in Section 3.14.

3.13.2 Affected Environment

The most common plant communities in upland areas are Annual Grassland and Coast Live Oak Woodland, followed by inclusions of Central Maritime Chaparral on hilltops and steep slopes, intergrading with Central Coastal Scrub. Central Coast Riparian Scrub is found along Prunedale Creek and its tributaries. Valley Needlegrass Grassland is only found in relatively undisturbed areas in a few parts of the biological study area. A description of each plant community type is presented below (see also Figure 3-32).

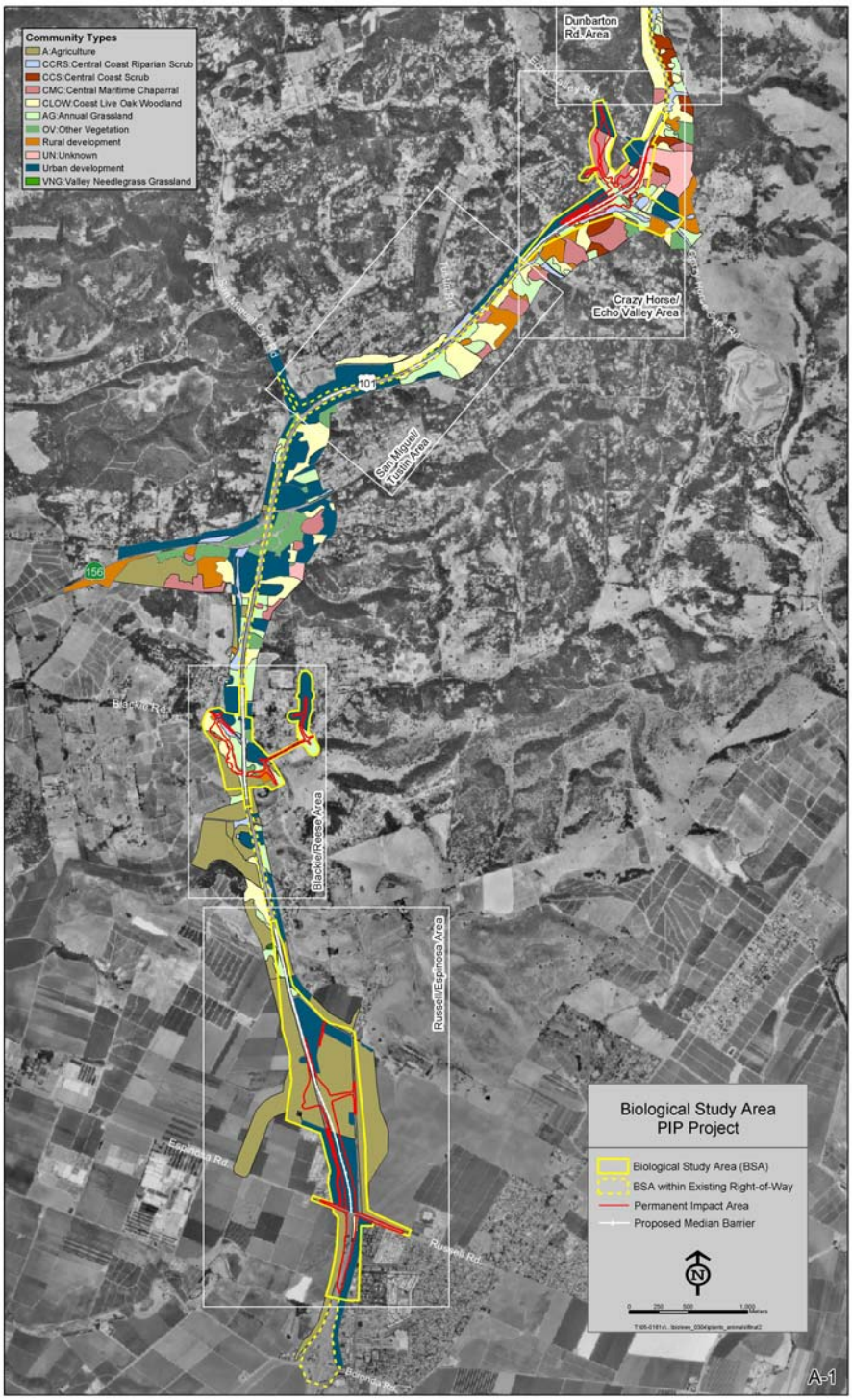

Figure 3-32 Biological Study Area

Annual Grassland

Annual Grassland covers large portions of the project area, and coupled with Coast Live Oak Woodland, occupies the largest acreage within the biological study area. Although this community type is often referred to as grassland, it also contains significant stands of introduced and native forbs. The dominant grasses within the biological study area are hare barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*), wild oat (*Avena* spp.), rip-gut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and soft shess (*Bromus hordeaceus*). Dominant forbs in the annual grassland include filaree (*Erodium* spp.), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), cut-leaf geranium (*Geranium dissectum*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), rose clover *(Trifolium hirtum*), manzanita species, and other woody perennial shrubs.

Coast Live Oak Woodland

Coast Live Oak Woodland is characterized by one dominant tree, coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), which grows in varying densities, from pure, closed-canopy stands to open savannas. The coast live oak is evergreen and reaches 25 meters (82 feet). Poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and ferns in moist areas often dominate the shrub layer. In dryer areas, the herb layer contains non-native annual grasses such as ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*) and barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*). Other characteristic species include coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and California sagebrush (*Artemesia californica*). Coast Live Oak Woodland is common throughout the project biological study area. It occurs in developed and undeveloped locations and intergrades with Central Maritime Chaparral and Annual Grassland. Some of the largest stands are located in the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area of the biological study area and on the hill at the western edge of the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area.

Central Maritime Chaparral

This community type is tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database. It is a variable scrub community with moderate to high cover dominated by specialized manzanita species. This community is found on sandy, well-drained soils within zones of coastal summer fog. Fire is needed for maintenance of the habitat; in the absence of fire, the community tends toward coast live oak woodland. Typical species are manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculata*), California sagebrush, coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*), Monterey ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *rigidus*), mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides*), toyon, sticky monkeyflower, coast live oak, coffeeberry, black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), and poison

oak. The community often intergrades with Central Coastal Scrub. In the biological study area, it was found only within the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area.

Central Coast Scrub

Central Coastal Scrub is composed of shrubs, 1 to 2 meters (3.3 to 6.7 feet) tall and usually quite dense. Dominant species are evergreen shrubs that exhibit more growth in late winter and spring. Flowering is concentrated in spring and early summer, but continues throughout the year. This community is adapted to fire by crown sprouting. The community type is often co-dominated by black sage, California sagebrush, sticky monkeyflower, and poison oak. Other characteristic species are coyote bush, mock heather, golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and coffeeberry. Some areas contain this community type interspersed with coast live oak. Central Coastal Scrub occurred frequently adjacent to and intergraded with Central Maritime Chaparral and Coast Live Oak Woodland. Within the biological study area, it was found only within the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area.

Central Coast Riparian Scrub

Central Coast Riparian Scrub forms a shrubby streamside thicket varying from open to impenetrable, dominated by any of several willow species. The dominant species in the Prunedale area are mostly arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) and yellow willow (*Salix lasiandra*). This early successional community grows along most perennial streams and numerous intermittent drainages. Specific locations within the biological study area include Prunedale Creek in the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area and further downstream near the intersection of Blackie Road and Route 101. Much more of Prunedale Creek would support this community if the creek were not periodically cleared of vegetation. As it grows to maturity, the community also supports black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) in the wetter areas and coast live oak in the drier areas. Good examples of the mature community are found on the Caltrans property south of the Route 101/Crazy Horse intersection. Under dense willows, an understory does not often develop, but in more open areas, watercress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquatica*), nutsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), cattails (*Typha* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and rushes (*Juncus* spp.) grow in slow-moving stream channels and wet swales.

Valley Needlegrass Grassland

Purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*) and a variety of other native and non-native plants dominate Valley Needlegrass Grassland. Areas with stands of native grasses

occur in two small locations within the biological study area. The first stand is found at the edge of a cultivated field west of the Route 101/Ralph Lane intersection at the north end of the Russell Road/Espinosa Road area of the biological study area. The second stand is near another cultivated field atop the hill at the western edge of the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area. Flatter, more heavily grazed or disturbed locations support non-native annual grasses.

3.13.3 Impacts

Of the natural communities listed above, avoidance, minimization, and/or compensation are proposed for three considered to be sensitive: Coast Live Oak Woodland, Central Maritime Chaparral, and Valley Needlegrass Grassland. Permanent impacts to these natural communities would occur within the areas of cut and fill. Potential temporary impacts would result in areas where construction activities occur between areas of cut and fill and a 10-meter (33-foot) buffer outside the new proposed Caltrans right-of-way.

The potential permanent impacts to Central Maritime Chaparral would be 2.97 hectares (7.33 acres). Temporary impacts would be 2.39 hectares (5.91 acres).

There would be no impacts to Valley Needlegrass Grassland as long as avoidance and minimization measures are implemented.

The permanent impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland would be 3.85 hectares (9.50 acres). The temporary impacts would be 3.74 hectares (9.24 acres).

There would be no impacts to Natural Plant Communities with the No-Build Alternative.

3.13.4 Cumulative Impacts

The impacts to Central Maritime Chaparral and Coast Live Oak Woodland (see Section 3.13.3 for information on impacts) would be fully mitigated with onsite restoration within the Caltrans right-of-way and offsite restoration, preservation, and enhancement of these plant communities on the state property. Valley Needlegrass Grassland would not be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to these plant communities.

3.13.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

To minimize permanent and temporary impacts (see Section 3.13.3 for information on impacts) to Coast Live Oak Woodland, Central Maritime Chaparral, and Valley Needlegrass Grassland, where feasible, the following measures would be incorporated into the project:

- Avoidance and minimization, including construction of retaining walls to reduce the project footprint, pre-construction surveys to establish environmentally sensitive areas, onsite biological monitoring to maintain environmentally sensitive areas throughout construction, and erosion control with storm water Best Management Practices.
- Loss of non-native vegetation—trees, shrubs, and grasses would be considered under avoidance and minimization measures. Non-native vegetation would be replaced at a 1:1 ratio using native plants where feasible. Revegetation would occur within the project limits and inside the Caltrans highway right-of-way.
- To minimize impacts where special-status plants cannot be avoided, individual plants that can be salvaged would be moved and replanted at designated sites within the project limits. If plant salvage is not feasible, plants that are removed in temporarily disturbed areas would be cut off at ground level to reduce disturbance to the soil rather than clearing and grubbing with heavy equipment. Seeds and topsoil free of noxious weeds would be collected and stored to use for re-seeding the temporarily disturbed areas.
- To reduce disturbance in areas that have potential habitat for California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and southwestern pond turtle, vegetation would be removed by hand. Also, any water used to control dust and protect air quality during construction would not be taken from local streams and ponds that support these species.
- In addition to the avoidance and minimization measures listed above, the terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion issued for this project under Section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would be implemented to further avoid and reduce impacts to federally listed species.
- Temporary construction impacts to sensitive plant communities, which include upland habitats for wildlife and special-status plants, would be mitigated onsite by restoring areas within the Caltrans right-of-way. Restoration would be planned to improve habitat as well as replace vegetation lost during construction. If onsite mitigation is not practical because of constraints such as water supply, soil types,

or size of the area required to adequately mitigate losses, the mitigation would occur on the same types of habitat chosen to mitigate for the permanent impacts.

3.14 Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States

3.14.1 Regulatory Setting

Wetlands and other waters of the United States are protected under a number of laws and regulations. At the federal level, the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) is the primary law regulating wetlands and waters. The Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Waters of the United States include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the Clean Water Act, a three-parameter approach is used that includes the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils subject to saturation/inundation). All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the Clean Water Act.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a regulatory program that provides that no discharge of dredged or fill material can be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. The Section 404 permit program is run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with oversight by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) also regulates the activities of federal agencies with regard to wetlands. Essentially, this executive order states that a federal agency, such as the Federal Highway Administration, cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds: 1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and 2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm.

At the state level, wetlands and other waters are regulated primarily by the California Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. In certain circumstances, the Coastal Commission (or Bay Conservation and Development Commission) may also be involved. Sections 1600-1607 of the Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that would substantially divert

or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify the California Department of Fish and Game before beginning construction. If the Department of Fish and Game determines that the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a 1601 Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement would be required. California Department of Fish and Game jurisdictional limits are usually defined by the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers may or may not be included in the area covered by a Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game.

The Regional Water Quality Control Boards were established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to oversee water quality. The Regional Water Quality Control Board also issues water quality certifications in compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Please see the Water Quality section for additional details.

3.14.2 Affected Environment

Caltrans conducted wetland delineations in 2001 and 2002 to determine the potential effects of the project on wetlands and other waters of the United States. Alternatives were evaluated (see Section 2.2, Project Alternatives), and each proposed improvement within the project limits was designed to avoid and minimize effects on wetlands.

Seasonal wetlands along Prunedale Creek were present within the Biological Study Area from the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area to the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area. Seeps, areas where groundwater occurs at the soil surface, were observed in the Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Road area (Figure 3-33).

“Other waters” refers to waters of the United States other than navigable waters or jurisdictional wetlands. These include streams, such as Prunedale Creek, which runs in a north/south direction through portions of the project area (Figure 3-33). Other waters of the U.S. occur in every portion of the project area. There is an artificial pond used for agricultural irrigation in the Russell/Espinosa area. However, the pond is not considered a jurisdictional wetland because the water source is artificial and it was not constructed in a historic wetland channel.

3.14.3 Impacts

The project would temporarily and permanently affect wetlands and other waters of the U. S. (Table 3.10, Figure 3-33).

Table 3.10 Potential Impacts to Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.

Location	Wetlands		Other Waters of the U.S.	
	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary
Russell Road and Espinosa Road Area	0.0 hectares 0.0 acres	0.0 hectares 0.0 acres	0.115 hectares 0.285 acres	0.014 hectares 0.035 acres
Blackie Road and Reese Circle Area	0.048 hectares 0.119 acres	0.024 hectares 0.059 acres	.056 hectares 0.139 acres	0.022 hectares 0.054 acres
Crazy Horse Canyon Road Area	0.380 hectares 0.939 acres	0.942 hectares 2.327 acres	0.024 hectares 0.060 acres	0.076 hectares 0.187 acres
Total Hectares/Acres	0.428 hectares 1.058 acres	0.966 hectares 2.386 acres	0.195 hectares 0.484 acres	0.112 hectares 0.276 acres

Caltrans coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (see Chapter 5, Summary of Public/Agency Involvement Process/Tribal Coordination). The following agreements/permits would be required: California Department of Fish and Game 1601 Agreement, Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, and a Regional Water Quality Control Board 401 permit.

3.14.4 Cumulative Impacts

Impacts to the natural community would be fully mitigated; therefore, cumulative effects would not be anticipated.

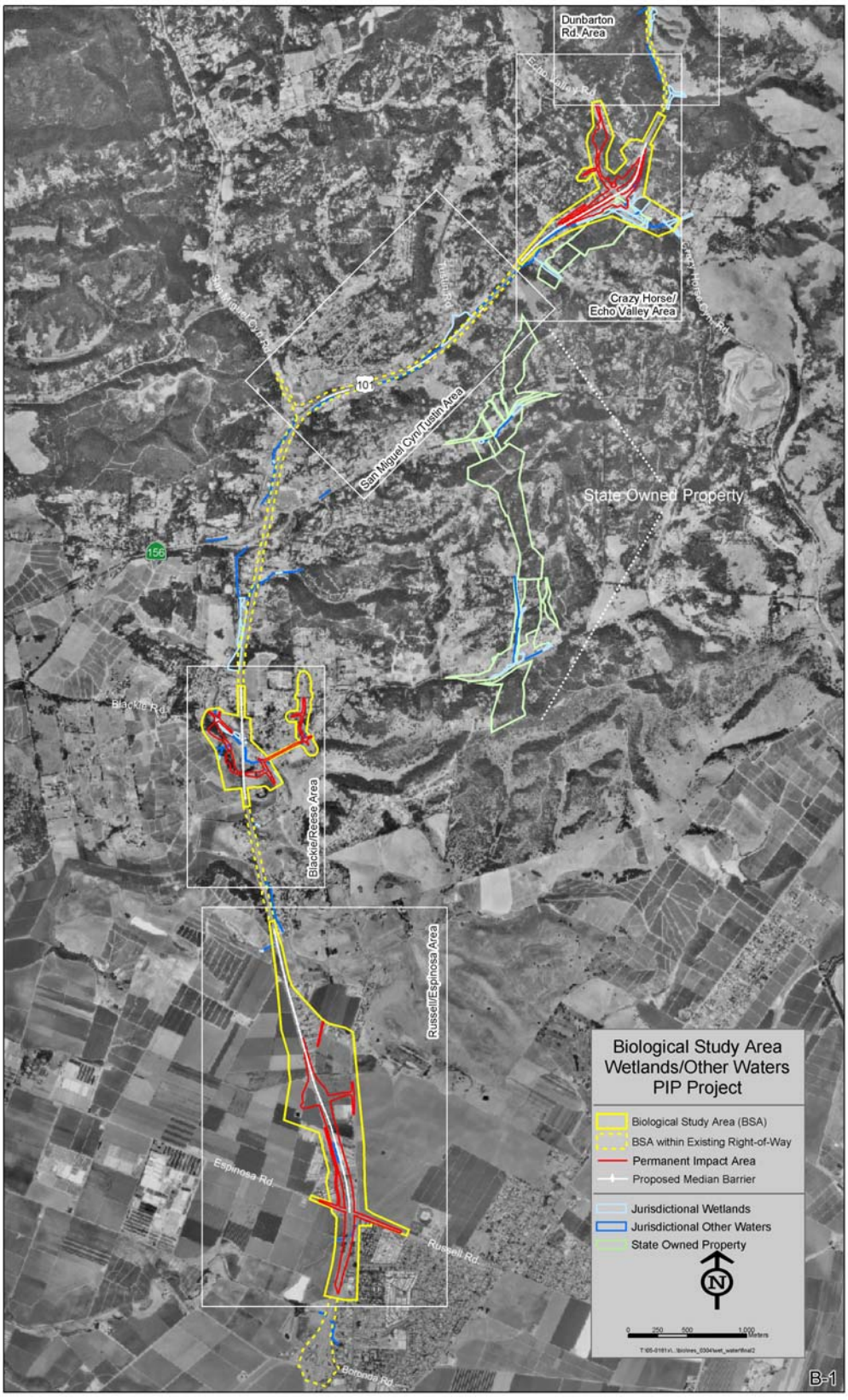

Figure 3-33 Impacts on Wetland and Waters of the United States

3.14.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and minimization measures, including construction of retaining walls to reduce impacts to seasonal wetlands, establishment of environmentally sensitive areas, onsite biological monitoring to maintain environmentally sensitive areas throughout construction, and erosion control with appropriate best management practices for storm water, have been incorporated into the project. In addition, construction activities would be restricted to the dry season, typically May 1 to November 1. All excavated materials would be removed from the area and properly stored.

Seasonal wetlands that are temporarily disturbed during construction would be replaced onsite within the new Caltrans right-of-way by restoring the wetland areas to their original condition. In the case of areas that were highly degraded before construction, restoration plans would be designed according to recommendations made by Caltrans staff, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Department of Fish and Game, to enhance those areas and improve habitat.

For permanent impacts to seasonal wetlands, the site(s) chosen for mitigation would be within the project limits where feasible. If onsite mitigation were not practical due to constraints such as water supply, soil type, or size of the area required for offsetting impacts, then the mitigation would occur within the same watershed and possibly at an offsite area that has yet to be identified. The number of hectares (acres) required for compensating for impacts would be based on resource agency recommendations, as well as the function and quality of aquatic habitat that needs to be replaced.

3.15 Plant Species

3.15.1 Regulatory Setting

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game share regulatory responsibility for the protection of special-status plant species. “Special-status” species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. “Special status” is a general term for species that are afforded varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and/or the California Endangered Species Act. Please see the

Threatened and Endangered Species Section 3.17 in this document for detailed information regarding these species.

This section of the document discusses all the other special-status plant species, including California Department of Fish and Game fully protected species and species of special concern, United States Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, and plant species listed by the California Native Plant Society.

The regulatory requirements for the Federal Endangered Species Act can be found at United States Code 16 (USC), Section 1531, et. seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. The regulatory requirements for the California Endangered Species Act can be found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et. seq. Caltrans projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at Fish and Game Code, Section 1900-1913, and the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code, Sections 2100-21177.

3.15.2 Affected Environment

The project area supports three plant species that are considered sensitive by the California Native Plant Society: pajaro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pajaroensis*), Monterey ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *rigidus*), branching beach aster (*Corethrogyne leucophylla*), and the Monterey spineflower (*Chorizanthe pungens* var. *pungens*).

Pajaro manzanita is an evergreen shrub with dark red, exfoliating bark, white flowers and no basal burl. It grows up to 4 meters (13.1 feet) high, and blooms from December to March at elevations between 70-360 meters (230-1181 feet). It grows in chaparral habitats in sandy soils. There are extensive stands of pajaro manzanita within the project limits at the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road area and throughout the Prunedale area (Figures 3-36 and 3-37).

Monterey ceanothus is a prostrate to erect evergreen shrub with bright to pale pink flowers that blooms between February and April. It grows at elevations between 3 to 200 meters (9.84 to 656 feet) in the sandy soils of closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub. This species was found in the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area in stands of pajaro manzanita in the Central Maritime Chaparral plant community.

Branching beach aster grows in closed-cone coniferous forest and coastal dune habitats. It was found at the Russell/Espinosa location in a small area of Valley

Needlegrass Grassland. The surrounding areas are strawberry fields or are disked for agriculture. Branching beach aster was also found at the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Overcrossing at the edge of a disked field just outside the drip line of Coast Live Oak Woodland. The area is highly disturbed and dominated by annual grasses like wild oat *(Avena* sp.) and soft chess *(Bromus hordeaceu*s). At the Crazy Horse Canyon/Echo Valley Road area, branching beach aster was found east and west of Route 101 and north of the Crazy Horse Canyon/Route 101 intersection. In both cases, it is within areas of non-native annual grassland in highly disturbed, eroded sandy soils (see Figures 3-34, 3-35, and 3-37).

3.15.3 Impacts

Permanent impacts to special-status plant species would result from cut and fill activities during construction. Temporary impacts would result from other construction activities that occur between the cut and fill and within a 10-meter (33-foot) buffer of the new proposed right-of-way. Potential permanent and temporary impacts are described in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Potential Temporary and Permanent Impacts

Species	Permanent Impacts	Temporary Impacts
Pajaro manzanita	2.97 hectares (7.33 acres)	2.39 hectares (5.91 acres)
Monterey ceanothus	0.006 hectares (0.014 acres)	No Temporary Impacts
Branching beach aster	0.06 hectares (0.146 acres)	No Temporary Impacts

3.15.4 Cumulative Impacts

Impacts to these special-status species would be mitigated; therefore, cumulative impacts would not be anticipated.

3.15.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and minimization measures would be the same as the measures included for sensitive natural communities found in Section 3.13.5 Additional avoidance and minimization measures incorporated into the project would be:

- To ensure that impacts are avoided or minimized, a qualified Caltrans biologist or designee would conduct pre-construction surveys. Individual plants that occur within the work zone that do not need to be removed for construction, would be designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

- Where feasible, individual plants that can be salvaged and relocated would be relocated to designated sites within the project limits.
- If salvage is not feasible, plants to be disturbed temporarily would be cut off at ground level to reduce disturbance to the soil rather than clearing and grubbing with heavy equipment.
- Topsoil that is free of noxious weeds would be collected and stored to provide the seed bank for reestablishing the plant species.
- If necessary, seeds could be collected from branching beach aster, Monterey ceanothus, and Pajaro manzanita and used for re-seeding the temporarily disturbed areas and seeding within the proposed mitigation site.

3.16 Animal Species

3.16.1 Regulatory Setting

Many state and federal laws regulate impacts to wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Fisheries, and the California Department of Fish and Game are responsible for implementing these laws. This section discusses potential impacts and permit requirements associated with special-status wildlife not listed or proposed for listing under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts. Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered are discussed in Section 3.17. All other special-status animal species are discussed here, including California Department of Fish and Game fully-protected species and species of special concern, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service or National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Fisheries species of concern and candidate species.

Federal laws and regulations, other than the Federal Endangered Species Act, pertaining to special-status wildlife include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

State laws and regulations, other than the California Endangered Species Act, pertaining to wildlife include the following:

- California Environmental Quality Act
- Sections 1601 – 1603 of the Fish and Game Code
- Section 4150 and 4152 of the Fish and Game Code

3.16.2 Affected Environment

Caltrans prepared a Natural Environment Study for the project (September 2004). The report indicated the project study area supports four sensitive species: southwestern pond turtle *(Emys [formerly Clemmys] marmorata pallida)*, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes luciana*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), and yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*). (See Figure 3-37 at the end of this chapter).

Southwestern Pond Turtle

The western pond turtle is the only native turtle in California and the southwestern pond turtle is listed as a California species of special concern. Although pond turtles are aquatic and occur in streams and ponds with adequate areas for basking in the sun, the females lay eggs in nests they dig in upland habitat. The nests can be up to 500 meters (1,640 feet) from aquatic areas; therefore, it is important to protect upland habitat, as well as aquatic habitat.

Southwestern pond turtles were not observed in the proposed project study area. However, a single southwestern pond turtle was observed outside the biological study area basking on the streambank of Prunedale Creek west of Route 101 between San Miguel Canyon Road and the Route 101/Route 156 interchange at Vierra Canyon Road. This is the same stream that flows through the project area at Blackie Road/Reese Circle where there is habitat for pond turtles. Therefore, there is potential for southwestern pond turtles to inhabit this portion of the project area.

Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat

The Monterey dusky-footed woodrat is a California species of special concern. The dusky-footed woodrat is typically found in areas with dense vegetation that offer cover and material for constructing houses made of sticks. In the study area, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat was found everywhere there were oak woodlands or thick riparian forest and appeared to be most abundant in thicker vegetation, such as the boundary between oak woodland and mixed chaparral. They did not occur where there was little woody debris on the ground.

Cooper's Hawk

The Cooper's hawk is a California species of special concern. This hawk, which inhabits oak woodlands and riparian forests, commonly returns to the same area for nesting each year, and it is the nest site that is considered sensitive. Cooper's hawks were observed within the Biological Study Area at Crazy Horse Canyon Road and Route 101; no nests were observed (see Figure 3-37 at the end of this chapter).

Yellow Warbler

The yellow warbler is a California Species of Special Concern. This bird, which inhabits riparian areas where it nests in willow thickets and in broad-leaved trees, also frequently returns to the same nesting area each year, and it is the nest site that is considered sensitive. Yellow warblers were observed in the biological study area at Crazy Horse Canyon Road, however, no nests were observed in the study area (see Figure 3-37 at the end of this chapter).

3.16.3 Impacts

Southwestern Pond Turtle

Permanent impacts would include loss of habitat in Prunedale Creek at Blackie Road/Reece Circle Area. The permanent impacts would occur when a new culvert is installed in the creek to accommodate the overcrossing proposed at Prunedale South Road/Blackie Road and when a new culvert is installed at Reese Circle/Cross Road. Also, mortality of individual pond turtles could potentially occur during construction activities at these locations. Temporary impacts would include displacement of individuals during construction and temporary loss of the use of aquatic and upland habitat in areas immediately adjacent to the construction area.

Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat

Permanent impacts to Monterey dusky-footed woodrat habitat would occur with the removal of riparian habitat and oak woodlands at Blackie Road, oak woodlands and central maritime chaparral at Echo Valley Road, and riparian habitat at Crazy Horse Canyon Road. In addition, there could be mortality of individual woodrats during the removal of vegetation in these areas. Temporary impacts that could potentially occur would be displacement of individual woodrats in areas immediately adjacent to the work area during construction.

Cooper's Hawk

Permanent impacts to known nesting sites for Cooper's hawks are not anticipated to occur during construction. If this species nests in the vicinity of Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Route 101 area, impacts would be a temporary displacement of individual birds foraging in the area during construction.

Yellow Warbler

Permanent impacts to known nest sites for yellow warblers are not anticipated to occur from the proposed project. If this species nests in the vicinity of Crazy Horse

Canyon Road, temporary impacts would be restricted to temporary displacement of individual birds foraging in the area during construction.

3.16.4 Cumulative Impacts

Since no permanent impacts to the species above would occur, cumulative impacts are not anticipated.

3.16.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Southwestern Pond Turtle and Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat

To minimize or avoid impacts to these special-status species that may be located within and adjacent to the area of potential impact, the following measures would be incorporated into the project:

- If southwestern pond turtle or Monterey dusky-footed woodrat are found within the area of potential impact or staging areas during pre-construction surveys, or during grubbing and grading activities, areas where animals have been identified would be designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
- If protecting animals by designating the area as an Environmentally Sensitive Area is not possible, a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Fish and Game would be necessary for authorization to capture and release animals to a pre-designated location outside of the work area that has the appropriate habitat.
- If the California Department of Fish and Game approves moving animals, the approved biologist would be allowed sufficient time to move these animals from the work site before work activities begin or resume.

Mitigation measures are not included for loss of habitat specifically for pond turtles and woodrats. However, habitat that is lost during construction would be replaced when the mitigation measures included for wetlands and other waters of the U.S., Coast Live Oak Woodland, and Central Maritime Chaparral are implemented (Section 3.14.5 and 3.15.5).

Cooper's Hawk and Yellow Warbler

To minimize or avoid impacts to these special-status bird species, the following measures would be incorporated into the project:

- To avoid impacts to nesting birds, any trees that need to be removed for this project would be removed before the nesting season between September 1 and February 1. The biologist or designee must be contacted at least one month before

trees are removed to allow a qualified biologist time to inspect trees for active bird nests.

- In addition, pre-construction surveys would be completed and Environmentally Sensitive Areas would be established if special-status birds are found nesting in the vicinity of the work area.

3.17 Threatened and Endangered Species

3.17.1 Regulatory Setting

The primary federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the Federal Endangered Species Act: United States Code, Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. This act and subsequent amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems on which they depend. Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Fisheries to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 is a Biological Opinion or an incidental take statement. Section 3 of the Federal Endangered Species Act defines take as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or any attempt at such conduct.”

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act, California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. The California Endangered Species Act emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats. The California Department of Fish and Game is the agency responsible for implementing the California Endangered Species Act. Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." The California Endangered Species Act allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions an incidental take permit is issued by California Department of Fish and Game. For projects requiring a Biological Opinion

under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Department of Fish and Game may also authorize impacts to California Endangered Species Act species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code.

3.17.2 Affected Environment

Monterey Spineflower

The Monterey spineflower (*Chorizanthe pungens* var. *pungens*) was federally listed as threatened on February 4, 1994, and designated critical habitat was published for this species on May 29, 2002 (see Figure 3-37 at the end of this chapter).

Monterey spineflower is an annual herb, blooming from April to June with white to rose flowers at elevations between 3 to 450 meters (9.84 to 1476 feet). It grows in maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands. Monterey spineflower was once fairly common in the Prunedale hills, but recent urbanization, recreational activities, agriculture, military activities, and non-native plants have reduced its range. During botanical surveys, Monterey spineflower was often observed in bare zones at the edges of Central Maritime Chaparral and Central Coastal Scrub where black sage was dominant.

California Red-legged Frog

The California Red-legged Frog was federally listed as threatened on May 23, 1996, and a final recovery plan was approved September 12, 2002. Designated critical habitat, which was listed March 13, 2001, was vacated on November 6, 2002. However, critical habitat was re-proposed for listing on April 13, 2004. This project falls within the boundary of Unit 17, Elkhorn Slough/Salinas River Unit for proposed critical habitat.

This species is the largest native frog in the western United States, ranging from 38.1 to 129.5 millimeters (1.5 to 5.1 inches) in length. Tadpoles range from 15.2 to 78.7 millimeters (0.6 to 3.1 inches) in length, and are dark brown and yellow with dark spots.

Frogs spend most of their lives in and near sheltered backwaters of ponds, marshes, springs, streams, and reservoirs. Optimal habitat consists of deep pools with dense stands of overhanging willows and an intermixed fringe of cattails. Eggs, larvae, transformed juveniles, and adults have also been found in ephemeral streams and in ponds that do not have riparian vegetation. Individuals are known to move long distances over land between water sources during winter rains.

Within the proposed project area, California red-legged frogs were observed in Prunedale Creek just west of Route 101 along Blackie Road, and in an intermittent stream north of Crazy Horse Canyon Road and east of Route 101. (See Figures 3-35 and 3-38 at the end of this chapter).

California Tiger Salamander

The California tiger salamander, Central population, was federally listed as Threatened by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on August 4, 2004 (USFWS 2004). Although critical habitat has been proposed for this species, the project does not fall within a proposed designated unit.

The California tiger salamander is native to California and occurs west of the Sierra Nevada in the Sierra foothills, the Central Valley, the coast ranges, and intermountain valleys from near Petaluma and Sacramento in the north to Tulare and Santa Barbara counties in the south. Restricted to grasslands and oak savannah plant communities from sea level to foothill regions (generally under 500 meters [1,640 feet]), the salamanders breed in vernal pools as well as man-made permanent and seasonal ponds. Adult salamanders spend only a few days or weeks in breeding pools during the wet season (usually November to March). During the dry season, adults as well as subadults and dispersing juveniles remain inactive in small rodent burrows, especially those of the California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*). Although maintaining ground squirrel populations appears to be essential to maintaining upland habitat (Loredo 1996, Trenham 2000), California tiger salamander will also use other small mammal burrows such as Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*).

Although California tiger salamanders were not observed in the project limits and there is no suitable aquatic habitat within the work area, immature California tiger salamanders were observed in a vernal pool located one mile away to the southeast of the intersection of Crazy Horse Canyon Road and Route 101.

Although the distance of the biological study area from the known California tiger salamander breeding pool is near the outer limits of known migration distances (observed in grassland areas), it is not expected that the project would affect the California tiger salamander according to the following line of reason:

- Numerous ground squirrel burrows and open grasslands are available within the immediate vicinity of the breeding pools. Salamanders would thus be able to obtain forage and cover within a short migration distance;

- Potential migration toward the biological study area would involve movement along/across a two-lane road with heavy truck traffic;
- Potential migration toward the biological study area would occur across urban and rural residential housing with associated risks posed by human and pet animal activities;
- Potential migration toward the biological study area would occur across areas of varying topography, the non-developed areas of which include dense stands of oak woodland, poison oak, riparian scrub, and/or blackberry.

3.17.3 Impacts

Monterey Spineflower

The temporary impacts to occupied habitat would be 0.013 hectare (0.031 acre). The temporary impacts to unoccupied but suitable habitat would be 0.148 hectare (0.366 acre).

Occupied habitat that would be permanently impacted is 0.002 hectare (0.006 acre). Unoccupied but suitable habitat that would be permanently impacted within the cut/fill line is 0.094 hectare (0.232 acre).

Designated Critical Habitat

Portions of this project fall within designated critical habitat (Unit G: Prunedale Unit) for Monterey spineflower. However, the locations within the biological study area where suitable soil types occur for this species and where plants were observed on the west side of Route 101 in the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area, are outside the boundary for this unit. Therefore, the project would not adversely modify designated critical habitat for Monterey spineflower. See Table 3.12 (Anticipated Effects to Listed Species) on the following page.

California Red-legged Frog

Suitable habitat (both occupied and unoccupied) for the California red-legged frog exists within the biological study area.

In occupied habitat, permanent impacts would include the loss of aquatic and riparian habitat in Prunedale Creek at the Blackie Road/Reese Circle area. The permanent impacts would occur when a new culvert is installed in the creek to accommodate the overcrossing proposed at Prunedale South Road/Blackie Road. Also, mortality of individual frogs could potentially occur during construction activities at this location. Temporary impacts would include displacement of individual frogs during

construction and loss of the use of aquatic and riparian habitat in areas immediately adjacent to the work area.

The total hectares (acres) of occupied habitat that would be permanently removed between the cut and fill line and inside the new proposed right-of-way would be 0.084 hectare (0.208 acre). The total temporary impacts to occupied habitat in this area would be 0.054 hectare (0.132 acre).

Suitable but unoccupied habitat within the biological study area includes those areas within close proximity to occupied habitat that has the potential to support the California red-legged frog.

The total hectares (acres) of unoccupied habitat that would be permanently removed between the cut and fill line and inside the new proposed right-of-way would be 0.452 hectare (1.116 acres). The total temporary impacts to unoccupied habitat in this area would be 1.567 hectares (3.870 acres). Designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog would not be affected. See Table 3.12 (Anticipated Effects to Listed Species).

California Tiger Salamander

No impacts to this species are expected as long as the avoidance and minimization measures are followed. See Table 3.12 (Anticipated Effects to Listed Species)

Agency Coordination

The California Department of Fish and Game, Army Corps of Engineers, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service have been consulted regarding this project. Table 3.12 shows the anticipated effects determination regarding listed species within the project limits.

Table 3.12 Anticipated Effects to Listed Species

Summary of Anticipated Affects to Federally Listed Species	
Federal and State Status	**Level of Affect**
California red-legged frog (FT)	May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect
Designated Critical Habitat for the California red-legged frog	May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Modify
California tiger salamander (FT)	No effect
Monterey spineflower	May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect
Designated Critical Habitat for the Monterey spineflower	No effect

FT = Federally listed as threatened

On April 28, 29, 30, May 1, and May 13, 2003, a Caltrans Biologist and a representative from the San Francisco Army Corps of Engineers office conducted a

field verification of the draft wetland delineation for the Prunedale Freeway Project. The final wetland delineation report was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers on June 15, 2004. Many of the wetlands that were verified along the existing Route 101 in 2003 would also be affected by the project.

3.17.4 Cumulative Impacts

Monterey Spineflower

Impacts to this species would be fully mitigated. Therefore, there would be no cumulative impacts.

California Red-legged Frog

Impacts to this species would be fully mitigated. Therefore, no cumulative effects would occur.

California Tiger Salamander

No permanent impacts to this species are anticipated. Therefore, no cumulative effects would occur.

3.17.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

When a proposed project may affect a listed species or designated critical habitat, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures must be taken. These measures must be coordinated with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and this process is called Section 7 Consultation. Section 7 Consultation involves the preparation and submittal of a Biological Assessment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which identifies the project and the potential effects on sensitive species and habitats. The Service then issues a Biological Opinion, which identifies the "effect determination" and necessary mitigation measures. Similar coordination occurs with the California Department of Fish and Game, resulting in a California Department of Fish and Game Section 2081 Incidental Take Statement.

Monterey Spineflower

The following avoidance measures would be incorporated into the project:

- Construction of retaining walls to reduce the project footprint where feasible
- Pre-construction surveys to establish environmentally sensitive areas
- Onsite biological monitoring to maintain established environmentally sensitive areas throughout construction

In addition to the avoidance and minimization measures listed above, the terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion that would be issued by the United

States Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 Consultation for this project would be implemented.

California Red-legged Frog

Avoidance and minimization measures incorporated into the project include pre-construction surveys, establishment of environmentally sensitive areas, and onsite biological monitoring during construction activities where there is habitat for California red-legged frog. In addition to the avoidance and minimization measures listed above, the terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion that shall be issued by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 Consultation for this project would be implemented to further avoid and reduce impacts to this species. (See Section 3.13.5).

California Tiger Salamander

No impacts to the California tiger salamander are expected to occur as a result of project construction. Therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

3.18 Invasive Species

3.18.1 Regulatory Setting

On February 3, 1999, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem, whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health." Federal Highway Administration guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the state’s noxious weed list to define the invasive plants that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act analysis for a proposed project.

3.18.2 Affected Environment

Invasive Plants

Invasive plant species were present throughout the biological study area, especially in areas of urban development. One species of particular concern was Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata* syn *Senecio mikanioides*), an invader of the Central Coast Riparian Scrub and Coast Live Oak Woodland community types. Cape ivy is not currently present within the biological study area boundary, but it did infest Prunedale Creek north of the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area and will likely disperse downstream

either by seed or fragments. Three more invasive plants, jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*), ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), and French broom (*Genista monspessulana*) were present on the hills in the northern part of the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road Area. These species could easily disperse into interchange construction areas as they colonize disturbed soils.

The California Invasive Plant Council maintains a list of exotic pest plants of greatest ecological concern in California (Cal-IPC 1999). Cape ivy, jubata grass, ice plant and French broom are all on the A-1 list: Most Invasive Wildland Pest Plants; Widespread.

Exotic Wildlife Species

An exotic species is defined as a species that is not native to the area and normally refers to a species that is either not native to the state, but occurs in other portions of the United States, or a species that is introduced from a foreign country. There are several exotic wildlife species that occur throughout the Prunedale area and within the boundaries of the biological study area at Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area.

Exotic aquatic species within the biological study area include bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), unidentified crayfish, and mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*). The bullfrog, native to central and eastern U.S., and the crayfish, were introduced as aquaculture species for human consumption. They eventually escaped or were released into the wild, invading streams throughout California. The mosquito fish, native to the eastern U.S., was introduced to the western U.S. to control mosquito larvae in streams, ponds, and ditches. Many counties in California, including Monterey County, periodically stock local streams and ponds with mosquito fish to control mosquito infestations. This species has also invaded streams and ponds throughout the U.S.

Terrestrial exotic species within the biological study area include the eastern red fox (*Vulpes fulva*), opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*), and European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). The eastern red fox was introduced from the eastern U.S. to fur farms in California in the early 1900s. These animals either escaped from fur farms or were released (Jameson and Peeters, 1988) and are now widespread in California. The opossum was introduced from the eastern U.S. to San Jose, California in the early 1900s and is now widespread throughout most of California and the U.S. (Jameson and Peeters, 1988). The European starling was introduced in New York in 1890 and arrived in California in the 1940s and competes with native birds for nesting sites.

3.18.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and / or Mitigation Measures

In compliance with the Executive Order on Invasive Species, Executive Order 13112, and subsequent guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project would not use species on the California list of noxious weeds. Exotic and invasive weeds would be removed during clearing and grubbing. In areas where exotic and invasive weeds are the dominant plants, the topsoil from those areas would not be re-used onsite in areas with sensitive plant communities or special-status plants. The project Biologist and the Resident Engineer would identify those areas in the field before construction. In areas that are to be re-vegetated and are identified for preservation, methods for removal and disposal of noxious weeds would be included in the restoration plan.

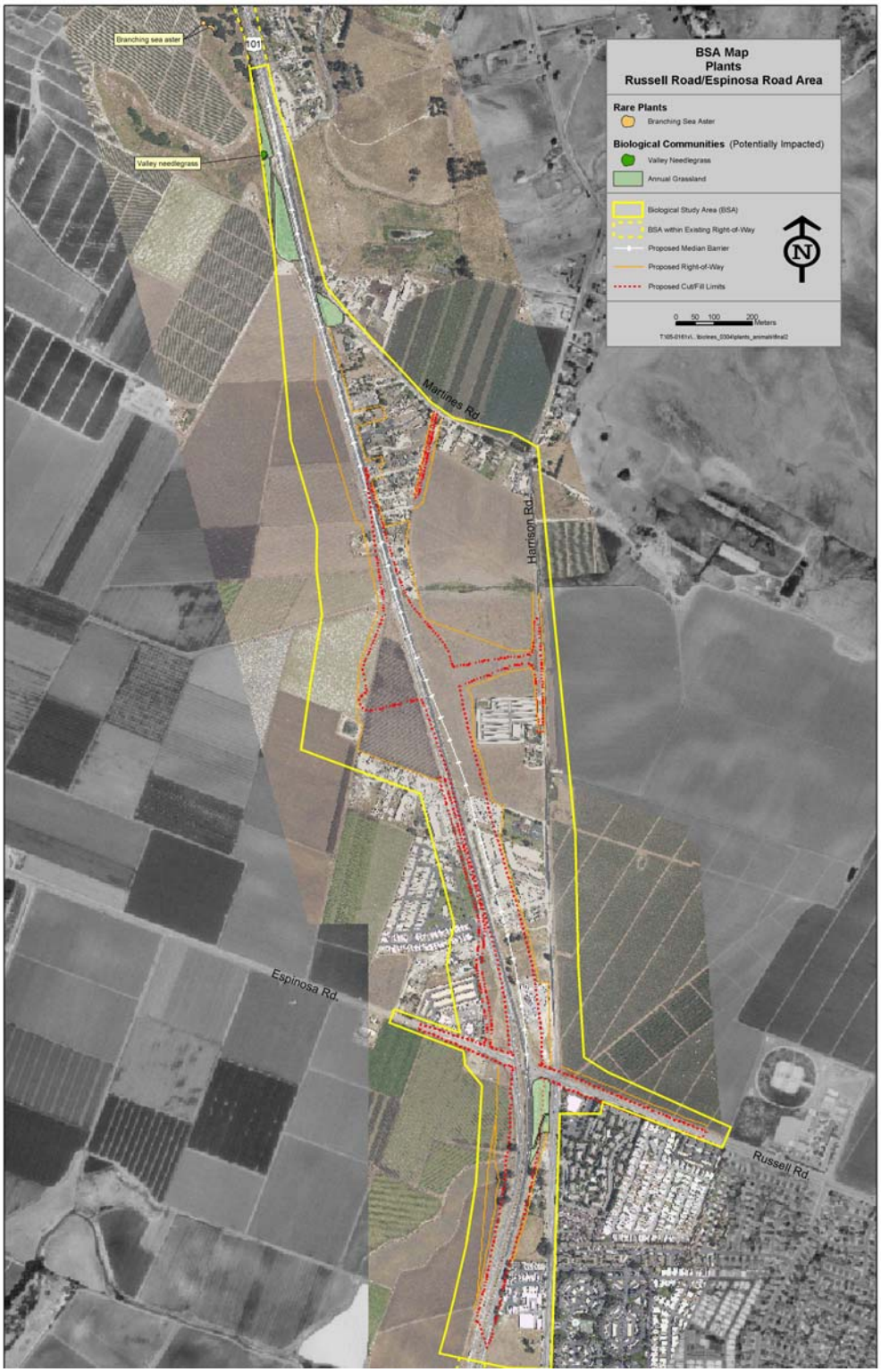

Figure 3-34 Sensitive Species in the Russell Road/Espinosa Road Area

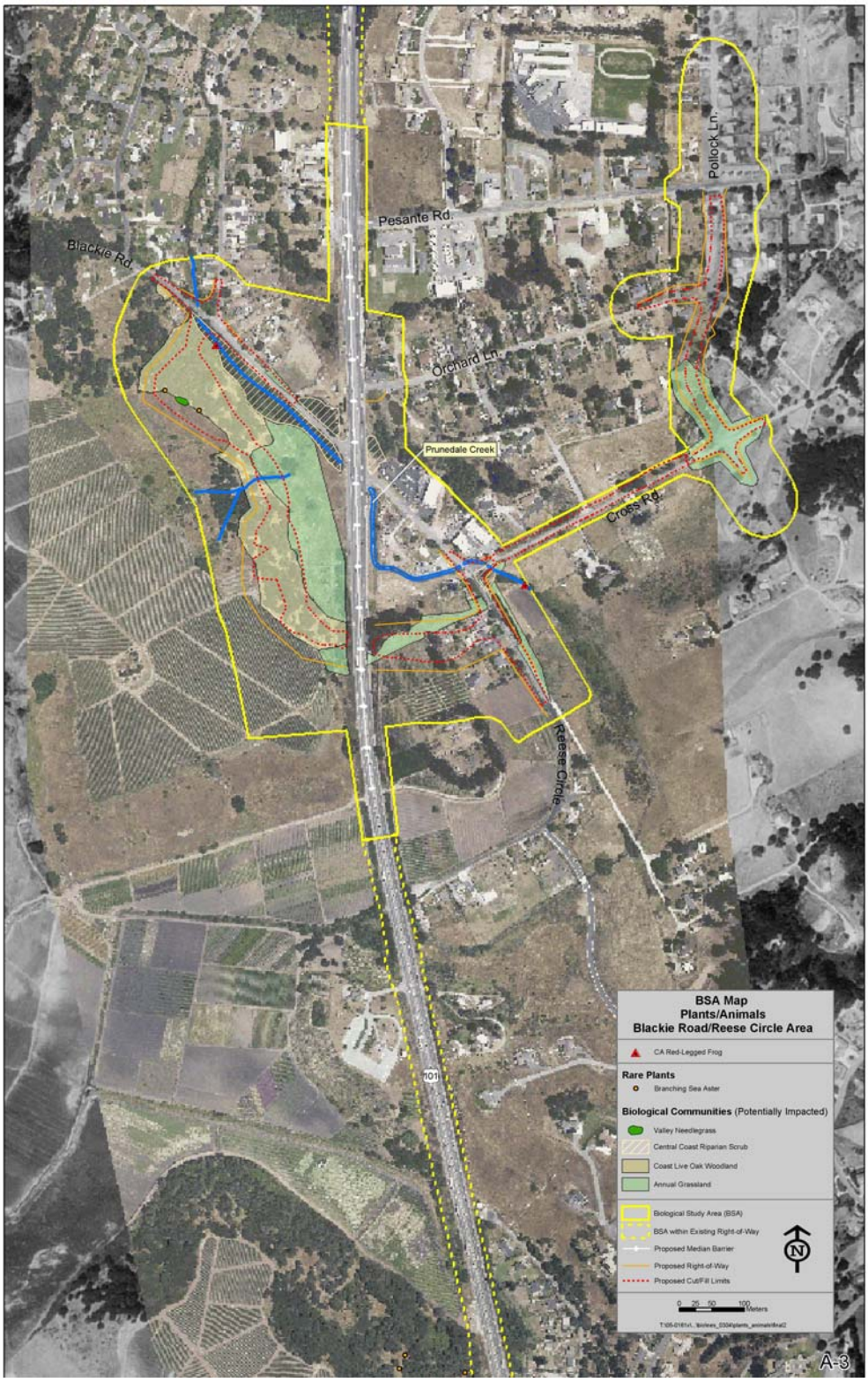

Figure 3-35 Sensitive Species in the Blackie Road/Reese Circle Area

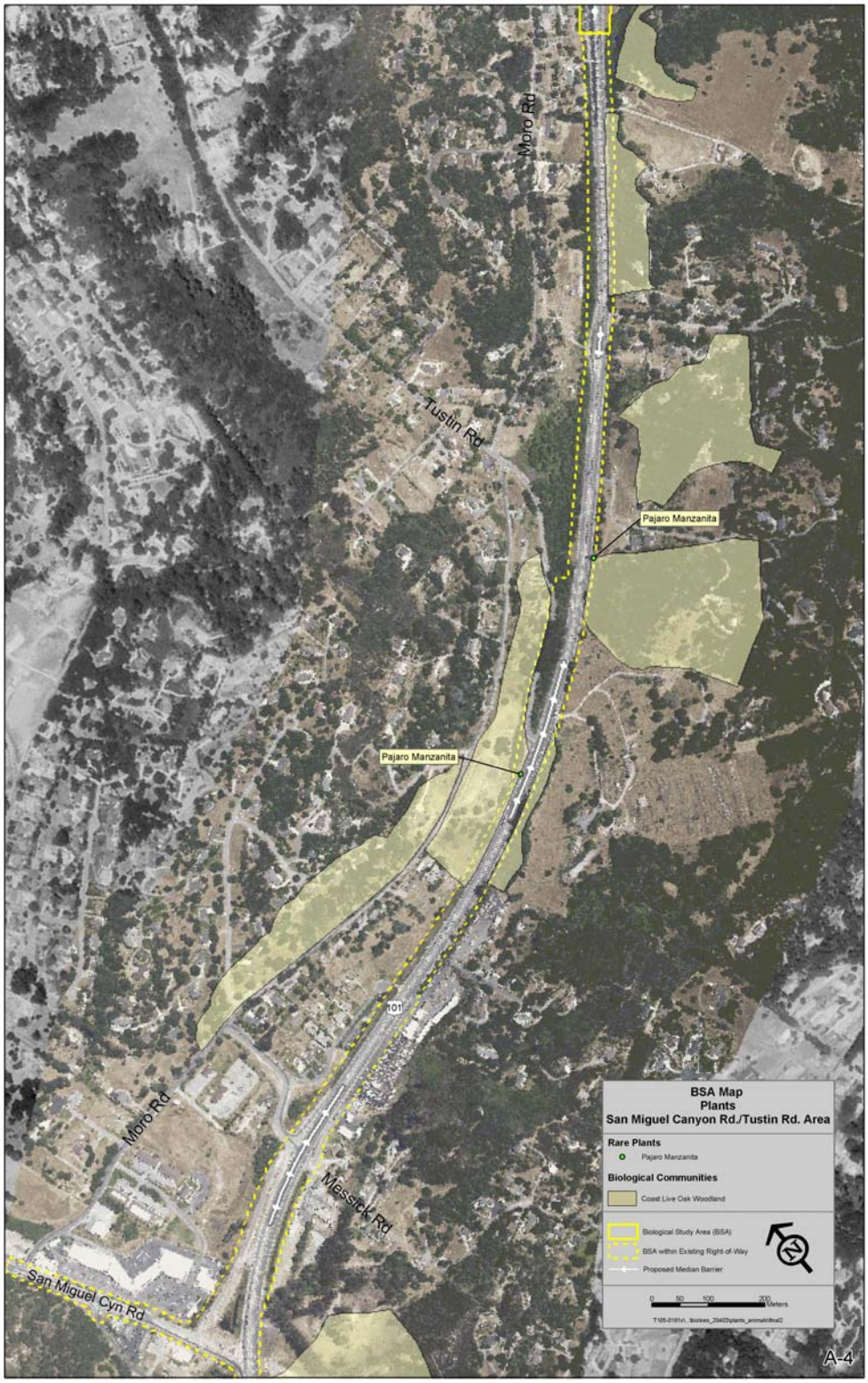

Figure 3-36 Sensitive Species in the San Miguel Canyon Road Area

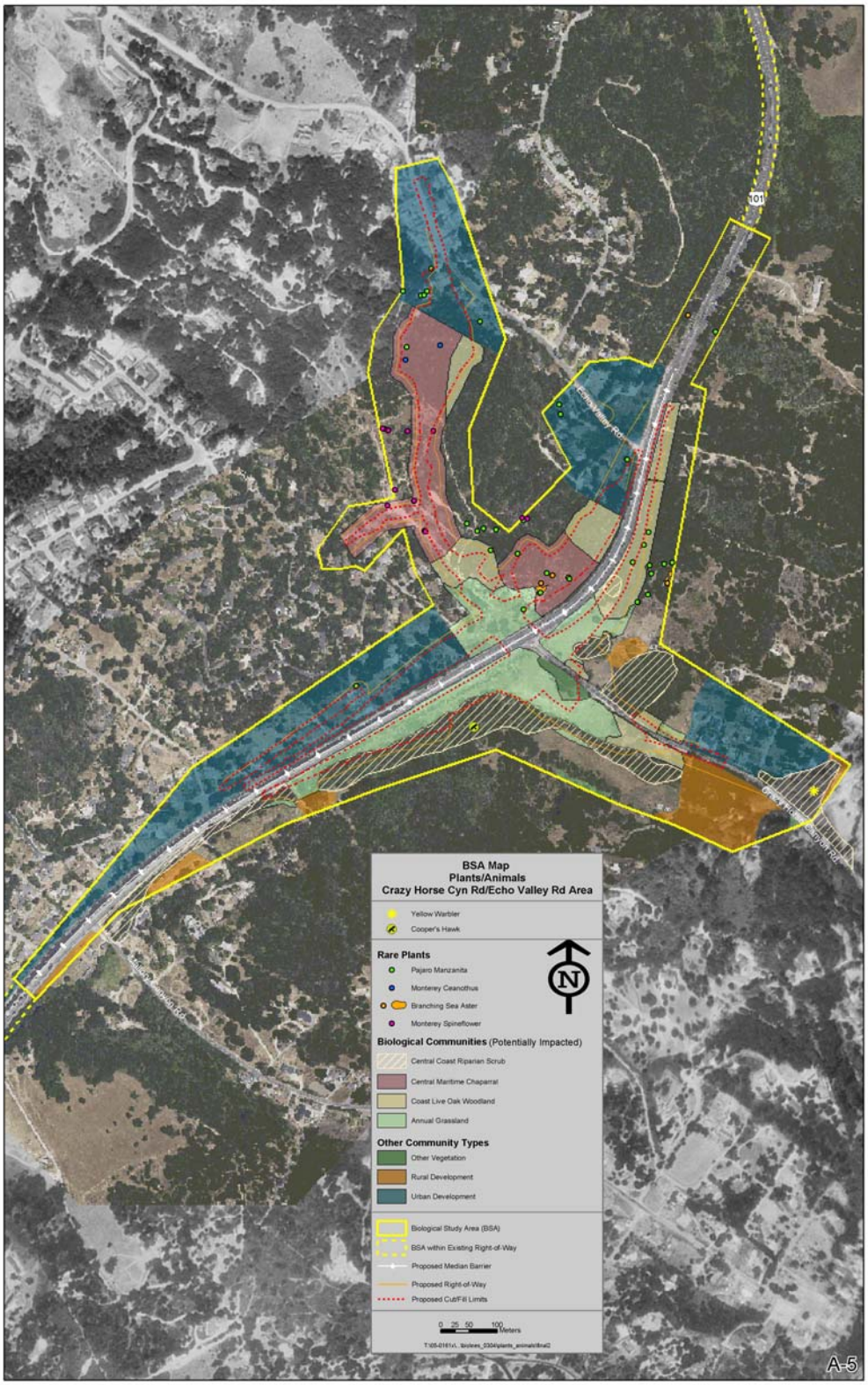

Figure 3-37 Sensitive Species in the Crazy Horse Canyon Road Area

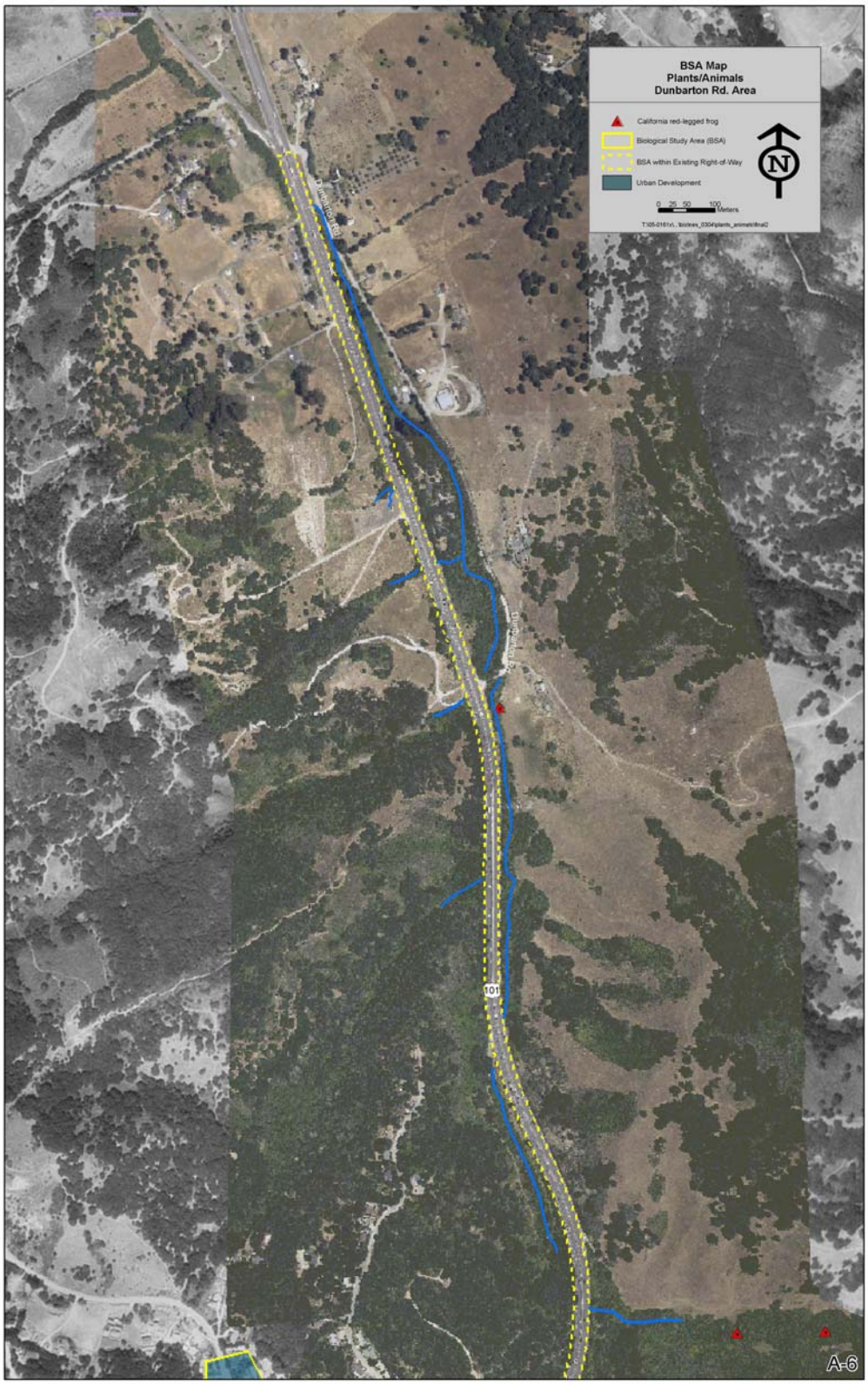

Figure 3-38 Sensitive Species in the Dunbarton Road Area

Chapter 4 California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation

4.1 Determining Significance Under the California Environmental Quality Act

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act and the Federal Highway Administration is lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act.

One of the primary differences between the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act is the way significance is determined. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, significance is used to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement, or some lower level of documentation, will be required. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) *as a whole* has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under the California Environmental Quality Act may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under the National Environmental Policy Act. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, once a decision is made regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Statement, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgment of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. The National Environmental Policy Act does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

The California Environmental Quality Act, on the other hand, does require Caltrans to identify each "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared. Each significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the Environmental Impact Report and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the California

Environmental Quality Act Guidelines list a number of mandatory findings of significance, which also require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. There are no types of actions under the National Environmental Policy Act that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of the California Environmental Quality Act. Please see Chapter 3 of this document for a discussion regarding the effects of this project and the California Environmental Quality Act significance.

As stated above, some impacts determined to be significant under the California Environmental Quality Act may not lead to a determination of significance under the National Environmental Policy Act. Because the National Environmental Policy Act is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, it is quite often the case that a "lower level" document is prepared for the National Environmental Policy Act. One of the most commonly seen joint document types is an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Following receipt of public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and circulation of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the lead agencies will be required to take actions regarding the environmental document. Caltrans will determine whether to certify that the Environmental Impact Report and issue Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations and the Federal Highway Administration will decide whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact or require an Environmental Impact Statement.

4.2 Discussion of Significant Impacts

The project would have an affect on the following resources. Where possible, significant impacts would be avoided by the implementation of mitigation measures.

- Aesthetics (Visual Resources)
- Biological resources
- Hydrology and water quality

4.3 Mitigation Measures for Significant Impacts Under the California Environmental Quality Act

Mitigation measures for potentially significant impacts are:

- Aesthetics (Visual Resources) – measures would seek to preserve or enhance key existing scenic qualities, frame desirable vistas, screen or distract from undesirable views, use forms and materials that are well related to other existing elements, and apply aesthetic treatments that fit the visual character of the area. (Refer to the Section 3.7 for additional information)
- Biological resources – measures would use state land and/or other land within the area that would provide the opportunity for preservation, restoration, and enhancement.
- Hydrology and water quality – detention/retention basins would be used within the area and specific permits required by the project would be obtained.

Chapter 5 Summary of Public/Agency Involvement Process/Tribal Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and public outreach meetings. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

5.1 Local Government/Planning Department

The County of Monterey and the Transportation Agency of Monterey County are active participants in the planning, development, and funding of the proposed project.

5.2 Public Involvement

On October 29, 2003, an Open House was held in the auditorium of the North Monterey High School in Castroville, California. Notices in the local newspapers and an invitation were mailed to interested parties and businesses.

Representatives from Caltrans, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and Monterey County were available from 4:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. A presentation was given by Caltrans, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and Monterey County officials, followed by a short question and answer session. The questions were submitted anonymously and in writing and answered by the panel. Display boards, handouts, and maps were on display and staff was available to answer questions. Approximately 170 individuals attended the meeting. Some of the main concerns raised included: access to and from Route 101, local circulation and road connections, business and residential relocations, safety, lengthy time-frame of project, community resources, and growth.

During circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, a public hearing will be held at the North Monterey County High School in Castroville, California.

The inside cover of this document asks for public comments on the proposed project and this document. All comments will be addressed and included in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

5.3 Native American Heritage Commission

On October 15, 2003, Caltrans sent a letter to the Native American Heritage Commission requesting a search of its files to determine if any sacred sites, plant gathering locations, or traditional cultural properties were known to exist in the vicinity of the proposed project. Ms. Debbie Pilas-Treadway of the Native American Heritage Commission returned a letter to Caltrans on October 22, 2003, stating their files did not indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area. The letter also included a list of 14 Native American individuals who may have concerns about the proposed project or have special knowledge of cultural resources in the project vicinity.

5.4 Native American Groups

Individuals listed by the Native American Heritage Commission were sent a letter, which described the project, the results of previous studies in the area, and the results of the archaeological survey, and requested their input about the proposed project. The letter was sent to additional Native American individuals who were involved with cultural resources studies for the Prunedale Freeway Project. The only comments received to date have been requests that Caltrans notify Native American representatives in the event that items of historic value or human remains are unearthed during excavation.

5.5 Local Historical Society/Historical Preservation Groups

The Monterey County Historical Society in Salinas and the Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum in King City also were sent letters describing the project, the results of previous studies in the area, and the results of the archaeological survey. No comments were received from these historical societies.

5.6 Biological Resources Coordination

On November 10, 2003 the Caltrans biologist met with the following agencies to introduce the Prunedale Improvement Project and discuss potential compensation, restoration, and preservation needs and options: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

An onsite field meeting was conducted on December 9, 2003 with the California Department of Fish and Game.

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Abdulrahim N. Chafi, Transportation Engineer. B.S. Chemistry, M.S. Chemistry, M.S. Civil/Environmental Engineering, Ph.D. Engineering Management. 1 year Air Quality Engineer at San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, 7 years Environmental Engineer. Contribution: Air Technical Study.

Steven T. Croteau, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S. Natural Resources. 5 years experience in environmental planning. Contribution: Environmental Planning Coordinator, document preparer.

Ken Doran, Engineering Geologist. A.A. Natural Science, B.A. Geology, MA Geology. 5 years Hazardous Waste. Contribution: Hazardous Waste Technical Study.

David Franke, Design Senior. B.S. in Civil Engineering. 16 years experience as a transportation engineer, 7 years as a Senior Transportation Engineer. Contribution: Design Manager.

Kay Goshgarian, Associate Environmental Planner. M.S., Environmental Management, B.S. Agricultural (Plant) Science. 5 years environmental planning. Contribution: Community Impact Assessment.

Corby C. Kilmer, Associate Landscape Architect. B.S. Landscape Architecture. 10 years experience in landscape architecture design and document preparation. Licensed Landscape Architect No.4131. Contribution: Visual Impact Assessment.

Stephanie Kulzer-Voss, Environmental Planner. B.S. Environmental Science and Biology. 4 years experience in environmental planning. Contribution: Environmental Planning Coordinator, document preparer.

John Magorian, Associate Right-of-Way Agent. B.S. Business Administration (Finance and Property Management). Experience in Real Estate Title work and Real Estate Sales, more than 17 years Real Estate Appraisal, and 5 years

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Dan Massa, Transportation Engineer. B. S. Civil Engineering. 11 years engineering experience, including 6 years in transportation design. Contribution: Project Engineer.

Wayne W. Mills, Transportation Engineer. B.A. Social Science, B.A. Earth Science. 19 years experience in environmental engineering. Contribution: Noise Technical Report, Paleontology Report, and Vibration Study.

Don Nishikawa, B.S. Civil Engineering. 16 years experience with Caltrans, 4 years with Hydraulics Department. Contribution: Location Hydraulic Study and Floodplain Evaluation preparer.

Eric Olson, Transportation Engineer. B.S. Civil Engineering. 6 years experience transportation design. Contribution: Project Engineer.

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Christopher Ryan, Associate Environmental Planner (Archaeology). MA Anthropology, 13 years experience cultural resources management. Contribution: archaeological surveyor, Archaeological Survey Report co-author, Historic Property Survey Report author.

Nancy Siepel, Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Science). BS Vertebrate Zoology. 23 years experience as a Wildlife/Fisheries Biologist. Contribution: Natural Environmental Study/Biological Assessment.

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Chapter 8 References

Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report, California Department of Transportation, September 2004.

Historic Property Survey Report, California Department of Transportation, November 15, 2003.

Water Quality Report, California Department of Transportation, October 21, 2003.

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Draft Relocation Impact Report, California Department of Transportation, November 15, 2003.

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Natural Environmental Study, California Department of Transportation, September 20, 2004.

Biological Assessment, California Department of Transportation, April 2005

Public Informational Meeting/Open House Summary Report, California Department of Transportation, November 15, 2003.

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Appendix A California Environmental Quality Act Checklist

The following checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. The California Environmental Quality Act impact levels include potentially significant impact, less than significant impact with mitigation, less than significant impact, and no impact. Information and analysis that supports these determinations can be found in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 summarizes California Environmental Quality Act significance findings.

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
AESTHETICS - Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	X	☐	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic building within a state scenic highway?	☐	X	☐	☐
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	X	☐	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	X	☐	☐
AGRICULTURE RESOURCES - In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	X	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	X	☐
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	X	☐
AIR QUALITY - Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentration?	☐	☐	☐	X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	X
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	X	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	X	☐	☐
C) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	X	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	X	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	X	☐	☐

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	X
COMMUNITY RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Cause disruption of orderly planned development?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Be inconsistent with a Coastal Zone Management Plan?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Affect life-styles, or neighborhood character or stability?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	X
e) Affect minority, low-income, elderly, disabled, transit-dependent, or other specific interest group?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) Affect employment, industry, or commerce, or require the displacement of businesses or farms?	☐	X	☐	☐
g) Affect property values or the local tax base?	☐	☐	☐	X
h) Affect any community facilities (including medical, educational, scientific, or religious institutions, ceremonial sites or sacred shrines?	☐	☐	☐	X
i) Result in alterations to waterborne, rail, or air traffic?	☐	☐	☐	X
j) Support large commercial or residential development?	☐	☐	☐	X
k) Affect wild or scenic rivers or natural landmarks?	☐	☐	☐	X
l) Result in substantial impacts associated with construction activities (e.g., noise, dust, temporary drainage, traffic detours, and temporary access, etc.)?	☐	X	☐	☐

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	X
GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	☐	☐	☐	X
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	X
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property.	☐	☐	☐	X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	X
HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably forseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous material, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	X	☐	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite?	☐	X	☐	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or offsite?	☐	☐	☐	X
e) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	X
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	X	☐
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:				
a) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	X
MINERAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	X
NOISE - Would the project cause:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	X	☐	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	X	☐	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
POPULATION AND HOUSING - Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	X
PUBLIC SERVICES -				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	X
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	X
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	X
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	X
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	X
RECREATION -				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC - Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☐	X	☐
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	X	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incomplete uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	x
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	X
UTILITY AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	X	☐
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
e) Result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	X
MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE -				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, or cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	X	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	X
SECTION 4(f) RESOURCES - Does the project:				
a) Result in the use of any publicly owned land from a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, as defined by section 4(f) (23 CFR 771.135)?	☐	☐	☐	X
b) Affect a significant archaeological or historic site, structure, object, or building, as defined by section 4(f) (23 CFR 771.135)?	☐	☐	☐	X
c) Involve "constructive use," as defined by section 4(f) (23 CFR 771.135)?	☐	☐	☐	X

Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
1120 N STREET
P. O. BOX 942873
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
PHONE (916) 654-5266
FAX (916) 654-6608
TTY (916) 653-4086

Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!

January 14, 2005

TITLE VI
POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person in the State of California shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity it administers.

WILL KEMPTON
Director

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Appendix C Summary of Relocation Benefits

California Department of Transportation Relocation Assistance Program

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ADVISORY SERVICES

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) would provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or non-profit organization displaced as a result of Caltrans' acquisition of real property for public use. Caltrans would assist residential displacees in obtaining comparable decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing by providing current and continuing information on sales prices and rental rates of available housing. Non-residential displacees would receive information on comparable properties for lease or purchase.

Residential replacement dwellings would be in equal or better neighborhoods, at prices within the financial means of the individuals and families displaced, and reasonably accessible to their places of employment. Before any displacement occurs, displaces would be offered comparable replacement dwellings that are open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and are consistent with the requirements of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This assistance would also include supplying information concerning federal and state assisted housing programs, and any other known services being offered by public and private agencies in the area.

RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION PAYMENTS PROGRAM

The Relocation Payment program would assist eligible residential occupants by paying certain costs and expenses. These costs are limited to those necessary for, or incidental to, purchasing or renting a replacement dwelling, and actual reasonable expenses incurred in moving to a new location within 80 kilometers (50 miles) of displacee's property. Any actual moving costs in excess of 80 kilometers (50 miles) are the responsibility of the displacee. The Residential Relocation Program can be summarized as follows:

Moving Costs
Any displaced person who was "lawfully" in occupancy of the acquired property regardless of the length of occupancy in the property acquired would be eligible for reimbursement of moving costs. Displacees would receive either the actual reasonable costs involved in moving themselves and personal property up to a maximum of 80 kilometers (50 miles), a moving service authorization, or a fixed payment based on a

fixed moving cost schedule, which is determined by the number of furnished or unfurnished rooms of the displacement dwelling.

Purchase Supplement

In addition to moving and related expenses payments, fully eligible homeowners may be entitled to payments for increased costs of purchasing replacement housing. Homeowners who have owned and occupied their property for 180 days prior to the date of the first written offer to purchase the property, may qualify to receive a price differential payment equal to the difference between Caltrans' offer to purchase their property and the price of a comparable replacement dwelling, and may qualify to receive reimbursement for certain nonrecurring costs incidental to the purchase of the replacement property. An interest differential payment is also available if the interest rate for the loan on the replacement dwelling is higher than the loan rate on the displacement dwelling, subject to certain limitations on reimbursement based on the replacement property interest rate. Also, the interest differential must be based on the "lesser of" either the loan on the displacement property or the loan on the replacement property. The maximum combination of these three supplemental payments that the owner-occupants can receive is $22,500. If the calculated total entitlement (without the moving payments) is in excess of $22,500, the displacee may qualify for the Last Resort Housing described below.

Rental Supplement

Tenants who have occupied the property to be acquired by Caltrans for 90 days or more and owner-occupants who have occupied the property 90 to 180 days prior to the date of the first written offer to purchase, may qualify to receive a rental differential payment. This payment is made when Caltrans determines that the cost to rent a comparable and "decent, safe, and sanitary" replacement dwelling would be more than the present rent of the displacement dwelling. As an alternative, the eligible occupant may qualify for a down payment benefit designed to assist in the purchase of a replacement property and the payment of certain costs incidental to the purchase, subject to certain limitation noted below under the "Down Payment" section (see below). The maximum amount of payment to any tenant of 90 days or more and any owner-occupant of 90 to 179 days, in addition to moving expenses, would be $5,250. If the calculated total entitlement for rental supplement exceeds $5,250, the displacee may qualify for the Last Resort Housing Program described below.

The rental supplement of $7,500 or less would be paid in a lump sum, unless the displacee requests that it be paid in installments. The displaced person must rent and occupy a "decent, safe, and sanitary" replacement dwelling within one year from the date Caltrans takes legal possession of the property, or from the date the displacee vacates the Caltrans-acquired property, whichever is later.

Down Payment

Displacees eligible to receive a rental differential payment may elect to apply it to a down payment for the purchase of a comparable replacement dwelling. The down payment and incidental expenses cannot exceed the maximum payment of $5,250, unless the Last Resort Housing Program is indicated. The one-year eligibility period in which to purchase and occupy a "decent, safe, and sanitary" replacement dwelling would apply.

Last Resort Housing

Federal regulations (49 CFR 24.404) contain the policy and procedure for implementing the Last Resort Housing Program on federal aid projects. To maintain uniformity in the program, Caltrans has also adopted these federal guidelines on non-federal-aid projects. Except for the amounts of payments and the methods in making them, last resort housing benefits are the same as those benefits for standard relocation as explained above. Last resort housing has been designed primarily to cover situations where available comparable replacement housing does not exist or when anticipated replacement housing payments, exceed the $2,520 and $22,500 limits of the standard relocation procedures. In certain exceptional situations, last resort housing may also be used for tenants of less than 90 days.

After the first written offer to acquire the property has been made, Caltrans would, within a reasonable length of time, personally contact the displacees to gather important information relating to:

- Preferences in area of relocation.
- Number of people to be displaced and the distribution of adults and children according to age and sex.
- Location of school and employment.
- Special arrangements to accommodate any handicapped member of the family.
- Financial ability to relocate into comparable replacement dwelling, which would house all members of the family decently.

The above explanation is general in nature and is not intended to be a complete explanation of relocation regulations. Any questions concerning relocation should be addressed to Caltrans. Any persons to be displaced would be assigned a relocation advisor who would work closely with each displacee to see that all payments and benefits are fully used, and that all regulations are observed, thereby avoiding the possibility of displacees jeopardizing or forfeiting any of their benefits or payments.

THE BUSINESS AND FARM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Business and Farm Relocation Assistance Program provides aid in locating suitable replacement property for the displacee's farm or business, including, when requested, a current list of properties offered for sale or rent. In addition, certain types of payments are available to businesses, farms, and non-profit organizations. These payments may be summarized as follows:

- Reimbursement for the actual direct loss of tangible personal property incurred as a result of moving or discontinuing the business in an amount not greater than the reasonable cost of relocating the property.
- Reimbursement up to $1,000 of actual reasonable expenses in searching for a new business site.
- Reimbursement up to $10,000 of actual reasonable expenses related to the reestablishment of the business at the new location
- Reimbursement of the actual reasonable cost of moving inventory, machinery, office equipment, and similar business-related personal property, including dismantling, disconnecting, crating, packing, loading, insuring, transporting, unloading, unpacking, and reconnecting personal property.

Payment "in lieu" of moving expense is available to businesses that are expected to suffer a substantial loss of existing patronage as a result of the displacement, or if certain other requirements such as inability to find a suitable relocation site are met. This payment is an amount equal to the average annual net earnings for the last two taxable years before relocation. Such payment may not be less than $1,000 and not more than $20,000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No relocation payment received would be considered as income for the purpose of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or for the purposes of determining eligibility or the extent

of eligibility of any person for assistance under the Social Security Act or any other federal law (except for any federal law providing low-income housing assistance). Persons who are eligible for relocation payments and who are legally occupying the property required for the project would not be asked to move without being given at least 90 days advance notice, in writing. Occupants of any type of dwelling eligible for relocation payments would not be required to move unless at least one comparable "decent, safe, and sanitary" replacement residence, open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, is available or has been made available to them by the state.

Any person, business, farm, or non-profit organization, which has been refused a relocation payment by Caltrans, or believes that the payments are inadequate, may appeal for a hearing before a hearing officer or Caltrans Relocation Assistance Appeals Board. No legal assistance is required; however, the displacee may choose to obtain legal council at his/her expense. Information about the appeal procedure is available from Caltrans Relocation Advisors.

The information above is not intended to be a complete statement of all of Caltrans' laws and regulations. At the time of the first written offer to purchase, owner-occupants are given a more detailed explanation of the state's relocation services. Tenant occupants of properties to be acquired are contacted immediately after the first written offer to purchase, and also given a more detailed explanation of Caltrans relocation programs.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

To avoid loss of possible benefits, no individual, family, business, farm, or non-profit organization should commit to purchase or rent a replacement property without first contacting a Caltrans relocation advisor at:

State of California
Department of Transportation, District #6
855 "M" Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Appendix D Natural Resource Conservation Form AD 1006

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*		Date Of Land Evaluation Request 10-14-2004	
ne of Project	Prunedale Improvement Project	Federal Agency Involved	FHWA
posed Land Use	Transportation	County and State	Monterey, CA
PART II *(To be completed by NRCS)*		Date Request Received By NRCS 10-18-04	Person Completing Form: Dorothy Dowling
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? *(If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)*	YES ☒ NO ☐	Acres Irrigated 260,073	Average Farm Size 1,277
Major Crop(s) Lettuce, Broccoli, Strawberries	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 388,633 % 18.2	Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 224,718 % 10.6	
Name of Land Evaluation System Used California Storie Index	Name of State or Local Site Assessment System N/A	Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 10-19-04	

PART III *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	93.0			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly	0			
C. Total Acres In Site	220.7			
PART IV *(To be completed by NRCS)* Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	38.8			
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland	5.6			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0.0001			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	N/A			
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)	82			

RT VI *(To be completed by Federal Agency)* Site Assessment Criteria *...teria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)*	Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
1. Area In Non-urban Use	(15)	15			
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use	(10)	10			
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	(20)	1			
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government	(20)	20			
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area	(15)	0			
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	(15)	5			
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	(10)	5			
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland	(10)	0			
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	(5)	0			
10. On-Farm Investments	(20)	0			
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	(10)	0			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	(10)	0			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	56			
PART VII *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*					
Relative Value Of Farmland *(From Part V)*	100	82			
Total Site Assessment *(From Part VI above or local site assessment)*	160	56			
TOTAL POINTS *(Total of above 2 lines)*	260	138			

Site Selected:	Date Of Selection	Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES ☐ NO ☒
...son For Selection:		
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form:		Date:

Appendix E Office of Historic Preservation Concurrence Letters

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
P.O. BOX 942896
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

November 21, 2003

Reply To: FHWA020225A

Gary N. Hamby, Division Administrator
California Division
Federal Highway Administration
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Determinations/Findings of Eligibility and Effect for Proposed Construction of the Prunedale Freeway, Monterey County, CA [HAD-CA FILE # 05-MON-101, 05-MON-156, DOCUMENT # P38383]

Dear Mr. Hamby:

Thank you for your letter of October 8, 2003 answering questions posed in our previous correspondence.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through Caltrans, is requesting my concurrence in the following:

- The following three properties are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):
  - E005, 134 Crazy Horse Canyon Road
  - G062, Moro Road
  - I054, 17541 Orchard Lane

- The FHWA has made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify any archeological sites within the proposed project limits, including archeological deposits beneath the present floor of the Salinas Valley. The FHWA has concluded that the likelihood of encountering such buried sites is extremely low. Based on the low likelihood of finding any additional resources and the extremely small percentage of outstanding properties (.005%) the agency seeks concurrence that the requirements under 36 CFR 800.4(a)(1) are complete and no additional inventory effort in necessary. If buried sites are discovered during construction, appropriate measures will be taken pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13(b).

- That the de la Toree adobe and any remains associated with the adobe were destroyed during road construction in 1932 and 1946, and no further studies are warranted.

Based on review of the submitted documentation, **I concur with all of the foregoing findings/determinations.**

Gary N. Hamby
November 21, 2003
Page 2

FHWA020225A
05-MON-101, 05-MON-156, DOCUMENT

Thank you for considering historic properties during project planning. If you have any questions, please call Natalie Lindquist at (916) 654-0631 and e-mail at nlind@ohp.parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Dr. Knox Mellon
State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Valerie A. Levulett, Technical Studies Branch Chief
D5 Heritage Resource Coordinator
Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
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(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

January 23, 2004

Reply To: FHWA040217A

Valerie Levulett
District 5 Heritage Resources Coordinator
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

RE: Historic Property Survey Report, Prunedale Improvement Project, US Route 101 Monterey County, 05-MON-101, KP R146.8/159.3 (PM R91.2/99.0) EA 05-0161E0

Dear Ms. Levulett,

Thank you for your letter dated February 11, 2004 initiating consultation with me regarding the above-mentioned project. You have done this, and are consulting with me, in order to comply with the January 1, 2004 *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Presdrvation Act, as it Pertains to the Administration of the (PA).*

In cooperation with the FHWA, Caltrans proposes safety and operational improvements to a segment of US Route 101 (US 101) in Prunedale, Monterey County, California. The proposed Prunedale Improvement Project begins 0.3 km (0.2 mi) north of the Boronda Road overcrossing of US 101 in Santa Rita, California, and extends approximately nine miles to 0.4 km (0.25 mi) north of the intersection of SR 101 and Echo Valley Road. Project elements include constructing a new 2.2 k (1.4 mi) segment of divided, six-lane, controlled-access freeway; a new grad-separated interchange; a new local-road overcrossing; a continuous concrete median barrier along the entire length of the project; and three box culverts, eight drainage basins, and one soundwall. Additionally, the project will convert two existing at-grade intersections to grade-separated intersections, as well as portions of the existing highway to frontage road.

You have provided me with a Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) documenting your efforts to determine whether this undertaking may affect historic properties. The report identified 8 architectural properties within the project's area of potential effects (APE) that had not been previously evaluated and that required formal evaluation under the PA. You state that as authorized by stipulation VIII.C.1., all resources identified within the APE that have no potential to be eligible for the National Register were exempted from formal evaluation pursuant Attachment 4 of the PA.

Pursuant to Stipulation VIII.C.5 of the PA, Caltrans is requesting my concurrence with their determination that none of the 8 buildings listed below that are located within the APE is eligible for the National Register. Additionally, Caltrans has found that no historic properties will be

affected due to the absence of identified historic properties within the undertaking's APE and is notifying me of that finding pursuant to Stipulation IX.A.1 of the PA.

I have reviewed the documentation provided and concur in Caltrans' determination that the following properties are not eligible for the National Register.

- 78 El Camino Real
- 17345 Blackie Rd.
- 17279 Blackie Rd.
- 9736 Prunedale South Rd.
- 9770 Prunedale South Rd.
- 9750 Prunedale South Rd.
- 9726 Prunedale South Rd
- 17559 Cross Road

Thank you for considering historic properties during project planning. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Galvin of my staff at (916) 653-4533 or by e-mail at agalv@ohp.parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Dr. Knox Mellon
State Historic Preservation Officer